

PATIENCE.

A Tale.

By Mrs. HOFLAND,

AUTHOR OF INTEGRITY, A TALE; THE SON OF A GENIUS, TALES OF THE PRIORY, TALES OF THE MANOR, &c. &c.

"Let Patience have her perfect work."

St. Paul.

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A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

"I THINK dear Miss Hemingford cannot be well to-night, she looks sometimes pale, and sometimes flushed, and has walked up and down that espalier walk this half hour---what can be the matter with her, Mrs. Aylmer?"

The lady to whom this enquiry was addressed, well knew that it was made from the kindest motives; she therefore replied,---

"Dora and myself, Mrs. Longden, are alike in a state of great anxiety, on the subject of a letter we expect to-night from her parents, to whom I have written, requesting their permission to take her with me to the south of France, which place, you know, I am ordered, for benefit of my health."

"If you could entertain a doubt of their ready acquiescence, you might well be anxious; but surely it is impossible they could think of removing her from you at that time, when your health requires the care of an affectionate and grateful daughter?"

"I hope they will not,---yet some of their late letters have indicated such an intention; and so material a change in my residence may have a tendency to confirm a wavering resolution."

"In my opinion," replied the good neighbour, "they will act most ungratefully toward you, and cruelly towards her, if they divide you;"---"you have reared her from infancy ---nursed her from a sickly plant, into a blooming flower, and---"

Mrs. Longden spoke warmly, for she wa really moved; but perceiving that her auditor who was but slowly recovering from a sev illness, became too much affected, she check herself, and after a pause, added in a soothi tone---

"To be sure, if you are obliged to r you will have the advantage of being wi Sydenhams, who are the best people i world;---and she, poor girl, will, I

bear the trial well; she is of such a sweet temper, such a patient disposition."

"Dora is, indeed, of a sweet temper, Mrs. Longden, and has great patience, considering that her sensibility is so acute as to render equanimity difficult. She is gentle, loving, full of kindness, and so utterly devoid of selfishness, that she may be said to live in, and for, her fellow-creatures; she will, therefore, doubtless, exercise self-controul for the sake of others, and whatever she may feel, will not complain."

"There is a principle of Patience," continued Mrs. Aylmer, in a subdued and solemn voice, "founded on more awful and affecting views,—the patience of a Christian,—the submissive resignation of a humble soul, which receives sorrow, injustice, and offence, as the chastisements of a heavenly Father;—this gher, purer, gospel-planted patience, I hope y Dora is not devoid of; but the quiet tenor our lives has not hitherto called it into ac- n:—should she enter the world without by her side, I fear she may too soon be d upon to practise it."

At this moment the subject of her remarks ed the room, to invite them to walk in

the garden, and see the setting sun throw his parting rays upon the rippling Usk, on whose banks they dwelt; but Mrs. Longden, aware that the moments were now precious, took leave. Mrs. Aylmer, after due wrapping up, accepted her young friend's arm, less to partake of pleasure than to evade solicitude.

As it was a period full of tender recollections, and awakened feelings to these friends, one of whom was still a handsome, though delicate woman in middle life; the other a tall, slender, half-formed girl, in her eighteenth year, with much about her that indicated the seclusion of a country girl, combined with the mind and manners of a gentlewoman—the promise of future elegance, in addition to existing beauty: we will take the present time for introducing them more intimately to our readers.

CHAP. II.

Mr. Hemingford was a merchant in Liverpool, and married in his thirtieth year, a very pretty girl under twenty. Circumstances had made her the intimate acquaintance of Mrs. Aylmer, who was a few years her senior, and who was married at the same time to a clergyman to whom she had been long engaged.

The first couple resembled thousands beside them; they were very fond of each other during the honey moon, and pretty well afterwards. ---The gentleman pushed his fortune in the counting-house, the lady exhibited the fruits of his industry in her drawing-room. The second couple were of a very distinct character, their affection was a bond of union that controuled and attuned every motion of their spirits, and they lived but for each other, and those to whom their duty attached them.

In the second year of his married life, Mr. Aylmer was cut off by a short illness, contracted by visiting a sick parishioner; he left

a widow, on whose distress it is unnecessary to dilate, since it would be impossible to describe, with only one little girl.

In a few months, the child died also ; and she was shortly afterwards summoned to attend the death-bed of her only relative, who, in leaving her his property, restored her to that place in society the early death of her husband had deprived her of, and brought her again to Liverpool.

Mr. Hemingford aided her in settling her affairs, and his wife received her with much pleasure and kindness :---she was now the mother of three girls ; but the widow perceived with pain, that notwithstanding her maternal character, she was still a laughing, giddy creature, whose greatest pleasure arose from wheedling or cheating her husband out of some childish amusement, or expensive bauble. He was become morose, and ungracious in his manners, and foolishly allowed himself to be exceedingly mortified that his wife had not given him a boy, observing, " that his eldest girl was certainly a very fine child, and almost as good as a boy ; but the second was a poor creature, and the youngest he considered as nothing at all."

Mrs. Hemingford, on the birth of her second girl, had sought to remedy her unintentional fault, by inviting a very distant relation of her own to become its godmother, who was rich and unconnected. The lady consented, on condition of giving the child her own name, to which the mother unhappily consented; for as Mrs. Dorothy Downe happened to be a person of singular manners, and very unpleasant to Mr. Hemingford, it was certainly a pity that he should be thus continually reminded of her. The child was baptized by both these names; and although a third was added, in order to reconcile the father, he persisted in calling the child only "Dolly," to provoke his wife, who thought proper to adopt that of Dorothea, observing, "it was equally proper and much prettier."

Whether it arose from the frequent disputes of which she was the innocent cause, or the preference constantly given to her elder sister, we know not; but it is certain that this child, though in good health, looked pale, and that she was timid, and silent, as if some interdict had been passed upon her; whilst a single word, a look of kindness, was received by her with such a bounding heart, and sparkling eye,

as to render her not only more interesting, but actually more beautiful, than her handsome sister.

Mrs. Aylmer had been long accustomed to a delicate child;—her heart, though bowed by sorrow, was full of kindness; and she soon found the little neglected child the most attractive person in her father's establishment, although one which might be easily detached from it without pain to either party. On this subject she thought long, and weighed it duly; but as the "little strong embrace" was wound more closely round her heart every day, at length she proposed taking the child, (whom she had hitherto called Dora,) to the sea-side, as a probable means of strengthening her.

The offer was joyfully accepted, and they set out for Swansea; but as Mrs. Aylmer had an unfortunate freedom from all ties of relationship which might influence her choice of a home, she eventually fixed upon a residence in the delightful village of Crickhowel, in South Wales, which combined with every beauty of situation, a small, but valuable circle of society.

From this period, her name, her home, the indefinable something, which had oppressed

her infant spirits, were alike forgotten :---she had not only the advantages of maternal tenderness continually exerted for her benefit, but that unrestrained freedom which renders the country a paradise to children. Green fields, in which to run with the lambs ; gardens, in which to plant flowers and gather them ; chickens to feed and to love ;---little children to visit and help ; little companions to expect and to play with ; heart, hands, and mind, were in daily exercise.

"Thus passed her time, a clear, unruffled stream ;" by no means disturbed by messages from home, towards which it was yet so much the care of Mrs. Aylmer to direct her views, and excite her affections, that there is no doubt Dora felt a very sincere regard for her parents, and a great desire to know and love her sisters ; and she would have had that pleasure in the course of the last fourteen years undoubtedly, if her mother had not intended, from time to time, to visit Mrs. Aylmer. The excuses she found it necessary to make were strong ones, as during this period she had been the mother of seven more children, of whom two only survived : six of them had been boys, but it appeared that an uncommon

delicacy had affected all her infants of this sex and the one whom she still preserved, was a subject of continual apprehension.

Such was the state of their correspondence, when, in the long-protracted spring of 1814, Mrs. Aylmer was seized by a severe illness, which reduced her to the brink of the grave, and left her so weak, that a residence for two or three successive winters in the south of France, was earnestly recommended to her. It was the more easy for her to follow this advice, in consequence of one of her neighbours, Mr. Sydenham, having resolved to remove thither with the greatest part of his young family, being desirous to procure for them the advantages of education. without infringing on that narrow income which rendered him a resident in his present cheap retirement. Such a change was contemplated by Dora and her companions with that delight natural to the young and curious; for although all were happy where they were, yet they all were at an age when mere change has a charm to the buoyant spirit, and enquiring mind.

The illness of Mrs. Aylmer had been the first affliction her beloved charge had known: —it had fallen like a shower on a thirsty land,

giving temporary gloom, and sorrow, to be repaid by fertilizing the soil, and calling forth flowers and fruit, from the hidden seeds, and deeply implanted lessons, of early days. Dora rose, in this season of trial, from a fond, artless, ingenuous child, to a sensible, reflecting, affectionate young woman; who united to perfect simplicity and sensibility, the mild fortitude which rendered her love efficient in its services, and gave to her attentions that value rarely derived from any quality but experience.

She became, indeed, not less the darling daughter, than the beloved friend, of her protectress; and when Mrs. Aylmer first ventured to leave her own house, which was for the purpose of attending the table of our Lord, thither Dora (for the first time) accompanied her. Every woman of feeling who has had the happiness of being led to the communion table in early life, by a tender parent, or guardian, will ever look back upon that hour as the most awful, yet most endeared to memory, of any in their existence. They will retrace the humility and sincerity of their devotions; and the sense of being exalted by this open profession of their faith, which, by rendering them members of the Church of Christ, gave

them a sense of being ennobled, and purified, yet bound to obedience and submission, by new duties, and stronger ties :---the sublime gratitude, the holy rapture, the spiritual aspirations of their souls in such moments, may be obscured in future life, but never can be obliterated.

Dora felt the holy emotions incident to this delightful duty, this blessed privilege, with all that intensity of interest, natural to one who was more especially called upon for thankfulness; and she was affected so much as almost to overcome her friend. When these high-wrought affections subsided, there was still left a peculiar suavity of manners, a solicitude to do right, an activity in the exercise of benevolent affections, and an oblivion to petty injuries, which proved that if the rose was fled, its odour remained; and as the shining of the patriarch's face shewed "with whom he had been," so did the conduct of Dora, though assuming no peculiarity, shew that she was adding to all that had appeared amiable in her character, that which was virtuous, pious, and solid.

She could not, however, fail to feel even more anxiety on the subject of the expected

letter, than she thought right, in consequence of some hints which had within the last three months dropped from her mother on the subject of her absence. Often had Dora earnestly desired to visit her family, (indeed she desired it now ;) but the idea of leaving her friend at a time when she so evidently required her attention, and of renouncing the pleasures the journey itself promised her, was a double sacrifice, from which she very naturally shrunk.

This necessary digression brings us again to the expected letter, which, contrary to all precedent, really arrived on the evening in question, and put a decisive negative on the requested permission to travel, softened, in the writer's opinion, by an assurance that they had intended to send for Dora for some time ; not only that she might form an acquaintance with her family, by a residence of a year or two, but that she might be an *assistant* to her father, seeing she wrote an excellent hand, and had doubtless been well instructed in the French language by dear Mrs. Aylmer, whose knowledge of that tongue they well remembered. She added, that Mr. Hemingford had very indifferent health ; having had a great loss in his partner, Mr. Stancliffe, whose son was

abroad, so that altogether he was at a loss for a clever, dutiful child, and hoped Dora would make it up to him for some time at least:—perhaps they might send her abroad by and by;—there was no saying; particular circumstances had arisen, but could not be explained. Undoubtedly Mr. Sydenham's family would supply the loss of Dorothea, for whom she would send a proper escort as far as Gloucester. She hoped if her dear, dear friend had it in her power to send over a little Mecklin lace, &c. she would not forget it, and was with love to the child, &c. &c.

Never could a decision so important be made, according to Mrs. Aylmer's conception of it, more ungraciously;—she saw that Mrs. Hemingford rent asunder the habits and bonds of two people who had grown side by side, during almost the whole life of one party, with as much ease as if she had torn a piece of muslin in two; and her heart recoiled from trusting a daughter who felt only too much with a mother who felt sadly too little. Yet a second and a third reading convinced her that the mandate must be submitted to; and Dora, though her heart was too full to permit her to speak, signified that she believed it to

be her duty to comply with the requisition; and she endeavoured to endure it firmly, and even cheerfully, lest her sorrow should add to the pain of her friend.

When the parting was really over, it may be supposed each gave herself up for a time to the intense overwhelming sense of sorrow, such a separation must inevitably inflict. Mrs. Aylmer trembled for the future peace of her beloved charge; she revolted at the idea of those employments her mother seemed to point out for her, and not less at the new associates with whom she might be called to mix; and she justly blamed herself for suffering so handsome and attractive a girl as Dora to depart without adverting to those offers which, in a large town, might probably soon arise to her.

Dora, on her part, felt wretched at the idea that her beloved friend should have need of her little services and find them not; but she tried to cheer herself by the remembrance of Eliza Sydenham's kindness, and when the first gust of sorrow was past, endeavoured to subdue all repugnance, to consider cheerful obedience as the test of her faith, the just submission to her heavenly Father, exacted by her earthly parents, towards whom she looked

with the more affection the nearer she approached them.

When at last she reached the place of her birth, these emotions became almost too much for her, and it is scarcely possible to describe her jarring sensations, when the first words that broke on her ear, was loud reproof to the servant who attended her, from a tall, thin, but gentlemanly looking person, whom she justly concluded to be her father, and whose pleasure, (if he had any,) in receiving her, was not sufficient to balance the vexation he experienced in finding she had been detained an hour beyond the time he had expected her.

Turning from the man, he at length addressed her, with---

" Well, Dolly,---you're sadly tired, I suppose; come along---your mother and Catharine are gone to the play, but you shall have some tea presently."

As he spoke, he took her by the hand, and kissed her cheek: timid as Dora was, and struck as she had been by his first address, her heart was moved; she threw her arm round his neck, and said tenderly, " dear, dear father."

Scarcely was she seated, when a shrill voice was heard, saying, " I will go in, I will see my

new sister;" and immediately a pale, but very pretty boy, in a flannel dressing gown, startled Dora by appearing before her.

It was very evident, from the gentle manners of the father to this his darling child, as well as from his own stile of behaviour, that this child was the indulged Idol of the family. He looked earnestly, yet kindly at Dora, asked her various questions, and at length said with an air of patronage, very inconsistent with the dependance indicated by his sickly looks,

"I shall love you, I am sure, very much, for you are not proud like Catharine, nor cross like Louisa, and not tired of me as Mama is,---have you brought me anything?"

"I will give you some pretty books, and some sea-shells, in the morning, my dear."

"You are a good sister;---they sha'nt call you Welsh woman, nor Dolly Downe, nor heiress, that they sha'nt."

Mr. Hemingford interposed now, to persuade him to go to bed, which was a little resisted, in the usual stile of spoiled children; but when Dora joined in the intreaty, he complied.

"You had better follow his example, child, for there is no saying when Mrs. Hemingford will be at home," said the father, very soon,

and Dora obeyed, for she was exhausted less by the fatigue she had undergone, than the grief she had suffered; the surprise, and pain, she felt in finding her mother and sister so engaged, was very great, and she wished to hide it from her father.

Dora was greeted by Frank's voice on her awaking :—she jumped out of bed, aware that she had slept late, and expecting to see her mother enter every moment; but no such interruption took place: at the door, the little hand of Frank, (who had been long waiting for her,) eagerly clasped hers, and a sense of the sweetness of fraternal ties, soothed and consoled her heart; and she descended with an open countenance and confiding mind.

Mr. and Mrs. Hemingford, their two daughters, and a visitant, were at breakfast, seated round a table where Catharine presided; and as all the ladies were in black, Dora, on casting her eyes round, saw so little distinction in their appearance, that she could not fix on any one, whom she thought old enough to be her mother :—the mistake was a happy one; it procured a kind kiss from the lady in question, but the salutes of the sisters were alike cold and ceremonious.

Mrs. Hemingford, notwithstanding the births and burials which made up the history of her life for the last twenty years, (which, together with increased irritability in her husband's temper, arising from many misfortunes and great cause for care and depression, might have subjected her to anxiety and exertion,) yet preserved her pretty face, and smart little person, wonderfully unimpaired. She was sufficiently *en bon point* to preserve her fair, smooth skin, without a wrinkle ; and possessed, in a singular degree, the voice of early life, and a propensity to a kind of chuckling laugh, which in her school days had gained her the bye name of "giggling Kitty." Her dress was precisely the same with that of her daughters, and was alike elegant and becoming :— in fact, to adorn herself, her daughters, and her house, had been the business of her life ; and it would be unjust to deny her the praise of due proficiency in her studies. They had, however, had the farther effect of transplanting the cares of life, and the pressure of time, from her own face to that of her husband ; since it was evident that Mr. Hemingford looked much older than he really was, and that, contrary to custom, the difference in their

age, which appeared slight on their marriage, was now become remarkable.

As soon as Dora sate down, her mother turned from her to describe, by the aid of a corner of the table cloth, a new trimming to her guest; and Mr. Hemingford exclaimed, as if in surprise, and displeasure, "Dolly, what makes you out of mourning?" "Dear me, Mr. Hemingford, how can you ask such a question? don't you remember we agreed to say nothing to her about—why, my dear, what was Mr. Stancliffe to her? you forget yourself strangely." "I did; you are right, but she must have a black gown now she is here."

"Lend her one of yours, my dear Catharine, and try to make her look decent, poor thing:—but one could not expect she should be like you," said the mother, in a coaxing tone to her eldest daughter.

Catharine rose with an air of haughty nonchalance, which rather indicated condescension than obedience; she was tall, handsome, and fully aware of her advantages, having been flattered from her cradle by the mother: —it was in vain that Dora sought to render her sensible of the love which she had ever

cherished for her, or indeed to enter into conversation with her on any terms. Cold answers, and supercilious looks, seemed to throw her affections back upon herself, and she felt more forlorn than she had done on the preceding day, for then she had something for which to hope :---ah ! how different was the world on which she had entered, from that which she had left ! how solitary was the gay and busy town, when compared with the silent vale, and the lofty mountains, which sheltered the only companion she had ever known.

Indeed it soon appeared, that although Mrs. Hemingford was a gay woman, and continually engaged either in visiting, receiving, or preparing for company, it was no part of her plan to admit Dora either to sharing her enjoyments, or partaking even the exercise necessary for her health ; for it was not until the succeeding Sunday that she was able to leave the house. She then accompanied her father and Louisa to church, it is true ; but alas ! the Sunday was nearly as much without religion, as the week had been without comfort. The morning was all bustle, the evening all dulness---her mother talked about nothing but flounces, and glass dishes ; her father about

keeping his ledger, and writing foreign letters: —books were never spoken of; all reference to the day, the sermon, the subjects connected with religion, were carefully avoided. Poor Dora remembered her late beloved pastor, her Sunday scholars, her dear associates, and above all, her beloved maternal friend, and her heart sunk within her.

Frank alone kept up her spirits, which were not merely chilled by an ungenial atmosphere, in which her heart could not expand, but also by constant active unkindness on the part of her sisters, perfect apathy from her mother, who was indeed a thing without a heart, and moroseness in her father, which was yet least oppressive, because it evidently proceeded in a great measure from some unknown cause of uneasiness which preyed on his constitution, and affected his temper. These parties all by turns quarrelled with each other; but in general the mother and her daughters made a strong side against the father; but let matters go as they might, in joy or sorrow, she was never treated as one of the family:—naturally communicative, because full of sensibility and frankness, with a highly cultivated mind and vivid fancy, she was compelled to an

unnatural silence, and every effort she made to prove affection, was treated with contempt that chilled, or ill-humour that wounded her. Services were exacted from her as if she had been the general servant of the family, and it appeared a settled point that she should undertake all the trouble of Frank's education; yet she was frequently upbraided as one who considered herself superior to the rest of her family, and arrogated to herself importance on the score of fortune. These accusations were not only false and cruel, but mysterious at times to Dora; but she soon forgot them in the quickly succeeding vexation.

When she had been thus situated about a month, Dora was one evening surprised by a visit from Arthur Sydenham, the eldest son of that family with whom Mrs. Aylmer was now happily domesticated. Dora could not fail to see him with pleasure which amounted to agitation; yet she had not forgotten that Arthur was the only person in his family who had not lamented her disappointment;—nor had she recollected the possibility that as he was himself destined to remain in England, it was possible that he might rejoice that they

should continue near each other. For Arthur, Dora had felt the most lively regard, almost affection, ever since she remembered any thing; —she considered herself in the light of a sister to *him*, and was in hopes that he had an equal regard for *her*:—of a feeling beyond this she had no idea at this time; but poor Arthur had. He had also a strong impression of the duties he owed to his family, what was expected of him from an excellent father, and demanded by his situation in life, as the eldest son of a younger brother.

Mrs. Hemingford expressed great pleasure in seeing him, talked incessantly of French silks and flowers, but scarcely made, or permitted, enquiry after Mrs. Aylmer. She spoke of meeting with his uncle, Sir Lloyd Sydenham, at Blackpool, enquired his destination, his College, and almost his expectations from his uncle, the baronet; but she neither adverted, nor permitted him to advert, to the pale looks and altered air of Dora, whom he perceived to be indeed a stranger in her father's house; and whilst his heart ached, yet overflowed with tenderness towards her, he had the additional sorrow of being impressed with

the full persuasion, that his uncle would never consent to any near connection with such a person as Mrs. Hemingford.

Arthur Sydenham departed under such evident depression of spirits, that Dora was affected by it; and her sisters, mistaking the cause, sneered at her, even before he was out of hearing, so indelicately, as to awaken the indignation of poor Frank, who was rewarded for his interference by a box on the ear, the first blow he had ever received in his life; it was therefore no wonder that he screamed aloud, and that even Mrs. Hemingford was withdrawn from her eager contemplation of the little parcel Mr. Sydenham had conveyed to Dora.

"Dear me, Catharine, what have you done? why did you strike the child? when you don't know but a blow may be his death, and are aware what a loss it would be to the family:---don't cry, Frank, my love.---God bless me, if his father were to hear him, we should all be ruined."

"But he shan't hear me," said Frank, suddenly stopping,---"I will be like Dora, and that will please her. I know if I am good, she will be so happy, so I won't cry any more."

The heart of Catharine was touched, and she resolved on a change in her conduct towards Dora, to whom she was well aware they were all indebted for great improvement in the manners of the little spoiled, though good tempered boy :---before she had time to speak on the subject, Mr. Hemingford entered the room, evidently so ill, or so unhappy, as to be incapable of noticing the red cheek, or eyes, even of his darling.

Thoughtless as his wife had ever been, and self-willed as were his daughters, yet they were aware of his value to themselves at least, and in great alarm they now crowded around him, asking various questions he was incapable of answering, and offering cordials he had not the power to swallow :---the apothecary was sent for, the patient put to bed, and the whole house a scene of confusion.

By degrees this alarm subsided, and the parties observing to each other, " that he was only taken the same as he had been before," appeared to dismiss the case as one of no moment; and Mrs. Hemingford turned over the patient to Dora, on the supposition that she must have become a good nurse—that she could sit up with her father, and take the cook

to wait upon her, and do every thing very well.

Dora entered on this office willingly, but fearfully, for she was aware of the deficiency of her knowledge, and the importance of the charge. In the course of the night, she became sensible, however, that the disease lay principally on the mind of the patient, and that he had received some shock in his business which had produced all his complaints, a situation which awakened her sincerest sympathy.

On Mrs. Hemingford's appearance she very naturally enquired into the circumstances which had overwhelmed him so much, but at the same time observed, "that Dora could leave the room."

"Nonsense," exclaimed the sick man, "she is a good girl, and may, and must be trusted. Who can I look to for help but her? is there any of you that would have sate by me all night as she has done?---no, no, she shall know every thing."

"Not *every* thing, Mr. Hemingford, not *every* thing, surely!"

"Well, well,---I know what I am about; my present business is to prepare---to pre-

pare, I say, for the arrival of Everton Stancliffe."

"Everton Stancliffe!" exclaimed Mrs. Hemingford, her colour forsaking her cheeks.

"Even so, Mrs. Hemingford; and if announcing his return half kills a man, I leave you to judge the effect of his appearance:---however, I must do the best I can---I have been thinking the whole night about it, and have made up my mind how to act; he will find an embarrassed partner, but not embarrassed accounts:---all my sins, or rather yours, shall be self-evident, and he must then act as he pleases."

Whilst Mr. Hemingford spoke, a clerk he had previously sent for entered the room with many large books under his arm, and the materials for writing in his hands, a sight which instantly put to flight all Mrs. Hemingford's late terrors; for although they were of no less serious import than the dread of poverty and disgrace, she exchanged them with wondrous facility for the dread of littered rooms and ink spots on the carpets, and concluded with wishing "she had never come into the room, for it had altogether given her the horrors."

The husband commanded her to go, in a

loud though tremulous voice; but the first impulse of anger was soon spent, and he turned his head and shook his pillow to hide the expression of deep sorrow and bitter vexation, which he felt upon his countenance, for no habit can render the wounded heart familiar with the disappointment of thoughtless unkindness.

"Go to breakfast, child," was his next command, and Dora obeyed; but her heart was penetrated with pity for her father, which did not subside the sooner, when she found her mother assuring Catharine and Louisa, in the easiest manner imaginable, that their father had established himself for a week or two, which would enable them to see company their own way.

When Dora sate down, all were silent as if in the presence of a spy; for either mystery, or reproach marked the conduct of every one towards her; and she was, with all the openness of her nature, and the obliging kindness of a disposition generous almost to a fault, compelled to feel herself not only a stranger, but one in a state of implied warfare, under all the circumstances incident to living in the land of her enemies.

CHAP. III.

Mr. Everton Stancliffe, the young gentleman whose expected return had been the evident cause of Mr. Hemingford's illness, was the only son of his late partner, who had been many years the head of the house, and the friend of Mr. Hemingford in early life. The latter gentleman became a partner with a much less capital than the established merchant, who from the kindest motives advanced him money, and accepted from him an easy interest; so that in the course of a few years he had every prospect of discharging the debt.

But Mr. Hemingford married a wife who, although she appeared afraid of him, at some *moments* of their existence, had yet an habit of forgetting his anger, his commands, and his counsels, for hours and days; and in point of fact, acted as if she were independent of him, and never allowed care of any kind to annul her schemes, or cloud her brow. In all his representations of his situation, or his

complaints of those misfortunes which arose to him (as to many others) from the state of public affairs, from whence he deduced the necessity for carefulness, his pretty wife generally answered, "that really she had no head for business, she never wished to meddle with affairs above her comprehension, and hated politics above all things." Did the unfortunate reasoner shift his ground, and explain to his lady, "the necessity for people with large families being more economic than those with small ones," and give for example the state of his partner's household in distinction to his own, he was generally answered with an harangue to this effect :---

"Dear me, Mr. Hemingford, what signifies talking, the more children people have, the more servants they must have, the more things they must buy, and the more bills they must run up---its all a plain case, and if you hav'nt luck this year, you'll have so much more next ---besides, my father always said, *one* boy could spend the portion of many girls---you may live to see Everton Stancliffe get through twice as much as we do, so pray comfort yourself."

"But how will that benefit us? what way can the injury of my best friend's property

help me who am dependant upon him? I say dependant, for I run behind hand every year!"

"Well, Mr. Hemingford, you must say what you like, for my part I have nothing to say to it, he is your partner, not mine---but just because I wanted a new set of curtains, (and I'll be judged by any body whether scarlet at this time of year is not much more suitable than blue,) then you begin with losses, and miseries, and children, just as if it was'nt I that had the children, and all the trouble of every kind."

In these exhibitions of another, but very common species of that poor-soulism Miss Hawkins has so inimitably defined, it invariably happened that the husband was wrought into an irritability which at length became habitual, whilst the wife maintained an imperturbility which she dignified with the name of good temper, but which was altogether distinct from any other goodness than that which belongs to the constitution, as it arose partly from weakness of mind, but still more from indolence which would not see its duty, and selfishness which would not renounce its enjoyments, and which soothed the suggestions of conscience, by setting the husband's ill-

humour as a balance against his unceasing industry, and his personal self-denial, from which she inferred that she owed him nothing.

As yet it would unavoidably happen in a large commercial town, that even the most wilfully blind see changes which compel them to think, and the most childish are somewhat matured by time; so Mrs. Hemingford had moments of alarm, and half hours of reflection and contrivance. One of these fits of thought succeeded her husband's information, but she soon relieved her own spirits by determining that Everton Stancliffe should marry Catharine, a plan which would, she observed, internally answer to them all, as Catharine had a good spirit, and would set all to rights by inducing her husband to renew his partnership with her father.

Mrs. Hemingford at this moment remembered that Everton had a good spirit too---but then "he was very fond of pretty women;" "*too fond,*" said her memory, but she put off that recollection by looking in the glass, and owning "that beauty was very interesting:" ---besides, "people changed when they were married; he was clever, and handsome, and rich, and (most probably) quite as good as

other young men; in short, 'twould be a charming match."

Mrs. Hemingford had never yet given her mind to match-making, being indeed resolved to play young herself to the last moment; to which it may be added, that Catharine had hitherto expressed much contempt for all Liverpool young men, and was, in the mother's opinion, always secure of a good bargain, when she would condescend to accept it. Dora, she had determined, should never marry; and Louisa was too young to think about it.

Young Stancliffe, in consequence of many losses which had befallen his father's house, was sent by the firm to Smyrna, in order to establish a new connection about three or four years before this period. He set out when he became of age, and had been successful beyond their expectations hitherto; it was therefore evidently a pity that he should return, especially as he had now no parent to whom his presence was important, and the activity of his partner was more likely to repair their numerous losses in Europe than any efforts of his, since Mr. Hemingford's experience in this respect gave his services an advantage, and his exertions were unceasing.

Yet, alas! these losses, and the corroding nature of interest money, together with the unrestrained expenditure of his lady, had reduced Mr. Hemingford's property so much, that it might be termed merely nominal; and if Stancliffe should refuse to renew a partnership with him, (which was the great object of his terror,) he was aware that he could not, at the conclusion of the present term, which was nearly at an end, command it elsewhere, from a total deficiency of capital. His services, his name, and even his probity, might evidently render him highly valuable, (poor as he was,) to a partner resident abroad; but divided from the house where he had laboured so long, reduced in constitution, and sinking into years, he could never hope to be grafted well on a new stock. From his late partner, he was well aware he would never have been divided; but a young man would not make the same allowances, nor could have the same recollections, and it was an appalling prospect for a man at fifty to shrink abashed before one of five-and-twenty.

Mr. Hemingford, however, exerted himself in the best way he was able, to meet the evil by a clear exposition, and narrow examination

into his affairs, in which he engaged poor Dora so incessantly, as to threaten the ruin of her health, by perpetual writing and watchfulness. But as in the pursuit of this painful duty, she became necessarily acquainted with the state of his affairs, and of course with the anxiety under which he laboured now, and the long solicitude which he had suffered for years, every feeling became absorbed in pity, and a desire to contribute to his relief. For her, no task was too wearisome, no toil too great; and although it too frequently happened that the work of many a wearisome hour was committed to the flames as useless, and the labours of many a long day called forth reproof, instead of approbation, yet one look at the care-worn face, or whitening hair of her father, never failed to check all resentment, and subdue all impatience in her mind. A single sentence of praise---or the words "Dora," or "Child," did more than any, save a heart so exercised, could conceive; not only could they soothe her sorrow, but inspire a spirit of exertion, an ambition of tenderness and duty, that seemed to give her powers before unknown, and surprising alike to herself and her employer. But neither her ceaseless exertions,

nor her delicate looks, excited praise or attention from her mother and sisters. Frank alone loved her; but he was already so much improved, and a boy of so sweet and kindly a temper, as to afford much on which she could rest for comfort; yet if she appeared to enjoy it in the short periods of her intercourse with her family, Louisa would accuse her of making a division in the house. By degrees, however, all other interests and affairs, (below as well as above,) were merged in the expected arrival of young Stancliffe, who seemed at length to affect the frivolous and speculating mind of Mrs. Hemingford, as much as he had long done that of her husband.

Happily the incessant labours of the latter, (or rather those of his daughter under his controul,) were finished a week or two before it was possible for him to arrive; and when that event was announced as having taken place, Mrs. Hemingford also was ready to exhibit her handsome daughter, in all the habiliments of fashion, if not the *agremens* of address; and since the work of conciliation could never be begun too soon, and Mr. Hemingford was indeed an invalid, as his countenance and thin spare form abundantly testified, she proposed

herself to make the first friendly call upon him, accompanied by Catharine.

Mr. Stancliffe lived a little way out of town, in a pretty house built by his father, and which had been put in preparation for his reception. At this time Dora had renewed her lessons to Frank, with whom she spent the greatest part of her time in a small back parlour; and when the ladies were set out, she went thither for the purpose of setting him a copy, and became so absorbed in the task, that a gentleman had entered the room without being observed by her, until he startled her by saying—

"Really you young ladies alter so much in a few years, that I do not know whom I have the pleasure of addressing, and am aware that I ought to apologize for an intrusion I yet cannot repent:—my little friend Frank, too, is grown surprisingly—I used to call him pet Frank."

"My name is Dora, Sir; I am so much a stranger as to be little known to my father's friends."

"Then to you, ma'am, it is necessary, even in this house, to introduce Everton Stancliffe," said the gentleman, with an air of graceful suavity, at once friendly and polite. Dora

felt her long cherished fears subside in a moment.

"I was a pet once," said Frank, with bustling deprecating anxiety; "but indeed, Sir, I am not so now, for Dora has made me good, because she is good herself, and quite different to sisters---and she can play delightfully, though they never allow her to touch the harp; and they call her Dolly, and sing songs about her."

"Frank!" said Dora authoritatively, and Frank was silent; but his glistening eyes still spoke her praise, whilst her own were timidly cast down, and her cheeks covered with the quick succeeding blushes that praise had elicited.

Mr. Stancliffe thought he had never seen any thing half so beautiful as Dora; for he was the more struck with the charm of a fine complection, from being accustomed so long to the yellow hues of the Asiatic. Before poor Mrs. Hemingford returned home to exhibit his destined bride, he "was gone whole ages in love" with that daughter whom she had predetermined should never marry.

The consequences may be easily foreseen; new anger at the innocent cause of this mis-

chief, manifested by every species of unkindness, not only from the females of the family, but frequently from her father also, whose wishes were thwarted, and whose schemes were crossed, rendered her life so wretched, that she was naturally drawn to look with more than common regard on the only person who approached her with approbation on his lip, and kindness in his eye: and had Stancliffe been much less handsome and agreeable than he really was, under such circumstances he could hardly have failed to make an impression.

Dora was too artless to disguise her feelings from people evidently interested in them, beyond what the state of the case warranted; and as soon as Mrs. Hemingford perceived that she was, to use her own phrase, "growing worse every day," she suddenly proposed sending her immediately to Mrs. Aylmer, a resolution poor Dora now heard with as much pain, as she would formerly have hailed it with gratitude and delight.

Yet happy, thrice happy, would it have been for her if this determination could have been acted upon; but most unfortunately, even whilst they were in consultation on the subject, a letter arrived from Mrs. Aylmer, saying, that

finding hitherto little advantage, she had been induced to go further south, and was then setting out for Italy, from whence she would write as soon as she was settled; but intreated her dear Dora not to distress herself, if her future movements should prove for some time a bar to their correspondence.

The vexation experienced by Mrs. Hemingford on this occasion, overcame the small portion of prudence she was mistress of; and she lamented the circumstance so loudly, that it caught the lover's ears, who was by no means deficient either in penetration or resolution—dreading some other scheme, and aware by this time of every thing hoped or feared by the father, he determined to secure Dora by a speedy marriage; and since her ardent desire to consult Mrs. Aylmer was now necessarily over-ruled, he considered that the parents might be easily managed.

Whatever the conversation was which now took place between the partners, two portions of it only transpired; the first, "that their articles of partnership were to be renewed for seven years;" the second, "that Dorothy was to be married on the same day when the agreement was signed;" and the union, of late so

abhorred, was now pushed with an avidity utterly repugnant to the delicacy of Dora, and decidedly subversive of that long and intimate acquaintance with each other's principles, tempers, opinions, and habits, which ought to form the basis of a connection, in which happiness and misery, time and eternity, are alike involved.

CHAP IV.

DORA spent the first week of her marriage at Buxton, and in its beautiful vicinity renewed the pleasure she was wont to find in the wild romantic scenery of Wales. Stancliffe admired it also, but it was rather with the sympathy of a lover, than from natural taste; and when he proposed returning to their own house, Dora gladly relinquished her temporary amusements.

The day after their arrival at home, a gentleman of somewhat stately appearance and precise address, called at the house, and enquired pointedly for its mistress—on delivering the message, the servant seemed so impressed with the importance of this person, that he conveyed his sense of it to the young couple, and they entered the drawing-room to receive the stranger together.

For some moments he fixed on Dora a scrutinizing eye, which by degrees relaxed in its expression, as he addressed her with the enquiry of—

"Pray, young lady, is your name Dorothy Downe Rose Hemingford?"

"That was my name, Sir, but I am married now."

"Married—um—married! and without once consulting, or even informing me."

"You, Sir!" said Dora with surprise.

"*You*, Sir!" exclaimed Stancliffe, fiercely.

"Yes, *me*, Sir;" returned the interrogator, with a look of calm contempt, which subdued the rising anger of the husband by the astonishment it produced.—"My name is Blackwell, Sir; I am the sole trustee of the will of Mrs. Dorothy Downe, and of course a person of some importance to this lady, Sir; and depend upon it if I find her settlement is not equal to her expectations, I shall exert the full power with which that will invests me."

"I am an entire stranger to all you speak of," replied Stancliffe, truly, looking at the same time to Dora. "And I am sure I am," said she.

"Then, Sir," said Mr. Blackwell, "send your carriage for Mr. Hemingford immediately."

"I can send my *servant*," said Stancliffe, significantly.

"Hold! perhaps I had better look a little farther into this affair without him:—may I ask what fortune you received with your wife?"

"None—but I may be said to have given one, since I agreed to take her father into partnership again, and have, in fact, renewed the bond which existed between us."

"And he made no mention of her property?"

"None—he spoke much of her *expectations*, which I understood as applying to the lady with whom she has resided, and of which I thought nothing, because I found she was a good looking widow, travelling on the Continent, of course very likely to find a husband."

"Um—um—um," was for some minutes the reply of the stranger; but after due deliberation, he said, "Then this young lady has no settlement?"

"She has not from me, certainly:—but if it should turn out that she has property—and if the matter could be done—I should not object"—

"Sir, she *has* property,—considerable property, after she arrives at the age of twenty-five; till which time, both principal and interest

are solely at my disposal. If her brother dies before the age of twenty-one, she becomes sole inheritrix; if *she* dies childless before twenty-five, he is her heir; but in any case, the property she may hold from Mrs. Downe, is subject exclusively to her own controul; for the old lady, as a single woman, was a mighty stickler for the rights of the sex, and determined that no husband should usurp power over her estate; of course a settlement is little called for, but under particular circumstances might have been desirable."

"Oh! I want no settlements," said Dora, eagerly pressing the hand of her beloved husband, with eyes that told him how she rejoiced in being enabled to give *him* a fortune; yet her mind could not forbear to glance a painfully retrospective view on the conduct of her parents, and their mysterious silence.

"Pray, Sir," said Stancliffe, "did Mrs. Downe leave her *whole* property to Dora and Frank?"

"No, Sir, she left many small legacies besides."

"Did she die worth much, Sir?"

"That question depends upon what is deemed *much*; if you mean to ask *how much* she

died worth, I answer that at the proper time, I must abide by my accounts—you will of course see the will, and learn that during the minority of the parties, my power is absolute in every point."

"Then you allow no income during that time?"

"My allowance depends on my pleasure; I have hitherto paid that young lady three hundred pounds per annum, and did propose increasing it to five, when she became of age, i. e. twenty-one."

It was now evident to Dora, why she had been sent for to her father's house—why, when there, she was shut out of society, and more especially, why she gave offence in becoming the chosen of her husband; since it was certain, that if they had been compelled to relinquish business, whilst they retained Frank and her with them, they would be enabled to live genteelly; but her heart naturally revolted against the unkindness, and selfishness, which had actuated their conduct towards her; and she was especially hurt with the secresy which had been observed in an affair of so much importance towards a person so remarkably open and ingenuous as herself:—this

observation was the only one which escaped her in the way of blame.

Mr. Blackwell reprobated this conduct strongly; but he said it was certain, "that even in her will, Mrs. Dorothy had herself expressed a desire that the young people should not be acquainted with their affairs till they had arrived at years of discretion," which furnished some excuse for them, although it might truly be said, "that if their daughter was not discreet enough to know her expectations, she certainly was very unfit for the awful situation in which she had taken upon herself duties of the highest responsibility."

Dora heard of this clause with the greatest pleasure, because it formed an excuse for the conduct of those she yet earnestly desired to love and honour; but in the eyes of Everton it formed not the shadow of apology; and long after the stranger had departed, he continued to inveigh against her parents so bitterly, and point out so many ways in which he was determined to mortify or injure them, in return for what he with great justice termed their *unwarrantable* conduct, that poor Dora became so alarmed and wretched, that all the value of her new found wealth vanished from

her eyes, and she felt only as if entering on a scene of anxiety and disquietude for which her spirits were utterly unprepared and inadequate.

CHAP. V.

Mr. Blackwell, the trustee of Mrs. Dorothy Downe, was now a country gentleman, but had formerly been a practitioner of the law in the metropolis; on which account, added to his well known integrity, his retired habits, competent fortune, and bachelor state, she had justly considered him a fit person to execute a delicate and singular trust: for it was a remarkable fact, that she disliked both the parents of the children to whom she bequeathed her handsome fortune, and of the children themselves it might be said, "that she knew nothing of the one, and it was her firm belief the other would not live."

Her predilection in favour of Dorothy arose partly, perhaps, because she bore her name; but principally, as she frequently declared, that, being educated at a distance from her family, there was reason to suppose she might escape their faults:—she also hoped, that she would either not marry at all, or unite

herself with some country gentleman, and become the mother of a family who would support the estates she bequeathed, in a style of independence and respectability suitable to the ancestors from which they were derived, and far removed from that world of commerce, whose triumphs she ridiculed, and whose wealth she despised.

Mr. Blackwell was her nearest neighbour, and although about ten years her junior, was so generally of her way of thinking on all worldly subjects, and so much amused by her caustic observations, that he entered into all her intentions for the future, and became even interested in her plans of benefiting persons to whom he was an utter stranger; and it was in consequence of this interest, that she placed his power of action as a guardian in a latitude so wide, well knowing that he was alike from property and principle, beyond temptation, and that he could, through that means, alone forward her views. Upon her death, Mr. Hemingford had been summoned by him to attend her funeral, and had thence conceived that a man apparently as immoveable as the antient hall he lived in, and one who seemed to hold the trust as a hardship, was not likely to inter-

fere in any way so long as he was let alone; and this idea unhappily combining with the desire of secrecy expressed in the will, and his own necessities, which urged him to make a property of his alienated child, altogether led to the conduct thus adopted—a conduct in which his family readily concurred, from the stimulus of envy in the daughters, and a sense of necessity in the expensive mother.

At the time when young Stancliffe suddenly made his appearance, and as suddenly became the admirer of that daughter whom they had decreed to a life of celibacy, Mr. and Mrs. Hemingford were not more vexed with an occurrence which thwarted all their plans, than ashamed of the part they had acted, and fearful of the discovery which was inevitable; well aware that the excuse of compliance with the will of Mrs. Downe, though it might operate in their favour with poor Dora, would not do so in the eyes of either young Stancliffe or any other person who might address her—they considered whether it would be possible to secure her from future admirers, in case her present attachment was broken; and after due deliberation, came to the conclusion, that as her marriage with some one was inevitable, it

would be better to take place with him by whom they could be most benefitted, and whose future wealth would be in some measure useful to them; nor had they the courage to meet those evils which a breach with Stancliffe must inevitably draw upon them. Of course they consented reluctantly to the marriage; and in the confusion arising from conscious disingenuousness, neglected that power of making a good bargain which the state of their daughter's fortune fully warranted, and left the future to chance.

In fact, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Hemingford were cunning, much less systematically dishonest. In the endeavour to make a property of their daughter, they had reasoned themselves in the first place, into an idea that it was only right, one so disproportionately endowed, should contribute to the support of her family; and from accustoming themselves to consider her too fortunate, they were led to the sin of really rendering her unfortunate, by making her unhappy; but they had by no means the power of carrying any regular design against her, or any other person, into execution. They contracted a sense of guilt on their consciences, subjected themselves

justly to suspicion from their disingenuous conduct, and lost all due influence over a young man whom they knew to be headstrong, and had proved to be unfeeling, without doing themselves or their child any good, or gaining those advantages which were in their power. In fact, Mr. Hemingford had too much integrity for his own intentions; he became confused and embarrassed, when his dread of poverty forced upon him sinister intentions, and exhibited a melancholy proof that the fear of want will derange the clearest intellect, and warp the most upright views; therefore it is alike wisdom, and virtue, to guard against it.

The following morning Mrs. Hemingford and Catharine, (whose pride, but by no means her affections, had been somewhat wounded by Stancliffe's preference of Dora,) made their appearance early, being alike eager to arrange the parties, and partake the gaieties, of a marriage they had so lately considered an irreparable misfortune. Mrs. Hemingford brought with her a reticule full of letters from her hus band for his partner to look over, observing, "she understood most of them were from Smyrna."

Stancliffe took them with a silent sneer on *his* countenance, so different from his usually free and polite carriage, as to communicate a pang even to her thoughtless mind; but it fell with much more effect on that of poor Dora, who, after all, felt that she was her mother, and could not bear to consider her an object of contempt to her husband;—in order to open the late occurrence in a pleasanter way than he seemed likely to do, she observed,—

"We were surprised yesterday by the visit of a Mr. Blackwell."

"Indeed! what sort of a person is he? I have never seen him—but I suppose he is quite an oddity? hi, hi, hi."

"Not so odd, madam, as some of our acquaintance, who bottle up heiresses in garrets and counting-houses, and leave it to chance whether they fly out to coblers, or are saved *in pity* by gentlemen," said Stancliffe.

"So—h!" said Mrs. Hemingford, with a long drawn breath, which with difficulty she prevented being the prelude to hysteric tears, though little subject to emotion of so powerful a character, "Soh! so!—then I suppose he has been telling you what he ordered us to keep a profound secret; that's some people's

consistency—well! I'm very glad it's all out, for I'm sure it has been at the point of my tongue a thousand times."

"And mine too," said Catharine warmly, and truly.

"I do'nt doubt it, for little Frank told me you called Dora 'heiress' often in derision; but we both fancied it applied to her expectations from Mrs. Aylmer—the fact is, that the insincerity, and cruelty of conduct observed towards Dora, is utterly inexcusable, and could be adopted only for the purpose of robbing and"—

"Robbing!!" exclaimed Catharine in a rage.

"Yes, Catharine, robbing *her*, and cajoling *me*—she has been in the most distressing situation amongst you, and"—

"*Has been!*—you mean she *is*; for no man of feeling would so speak to *her* mother; but Everton Stancliffe's temper is no secret to any one—if she had a thousand pounds for every twenty she will ever see, she would still be a miserable woman with such a man as you."

Stancliffe gazed on Catharine with looks indicative of rage and fury, that were absolutely ferocious, and so terrified Dora, that

although she rose as if to supplicate him for mercy on them all, she sunk back pale and almost fainting on her seat; whilst he, though generally a man of fluency in speech, appeared unable to utter reply, from the passion, which shook him almost to phrenzy.

" At all events *you* have much to be thankful for," said Mrs. Hemingford; " we are the losers every way—and even supposing we had done wrong, which it is certain we did not, yet it is all in your favour, Mr. Stancliffe:—if Dora had remained in Wales, (which was what Mr. Blackwell very much wished for,) undoubtedly she would have married young Sydenham, (and been lady Sydenham some time,) so that at any rate *you* have reason to be thankful."

Dora opened her half closed eyes, and gazed at her mother with an air of astonishment, which recalled her husband to his senses, by presenting him with a new and painful subject of surmise; but the quick and rapid glances of his brilliant eyes still continued to infuse terror, as, gathering his letters together in haste, he waived the subject for the present, by saying—

" These letters are, (as you said, ma'am,) of

the utmost importance—if I mistake not, they will lead some of us a longer journey than agreeable—but you, Miss Hemingford, are amazingly well calculated for playing eastern princess—your beauty will become an Haram."

"What can he mean?" said Mrs. Hemingford, as Stancliffe left the room, and immediately afterwards the house—"he cannot surely think of sending your father to travel at his time of life! well, however, I am glad he is gone; but I am very sorry old Blackwell has been, for I certainly did expect to get the next half year's income for Dora, and so I ought, because of her wedding things—but come, child, pray do'nt sit there as if you were frightened to death—women an't so soon killed, take my word for it; come, let us go up stairs and see what pretty things you have brought from Buxton."

Dora obeyed; but she could not, like her thoughtless mother, recover from the shock she had received, nor readily forgive Catharine for offending her husband to such a degree as to render him the being she had described; and she was really glad when they departed, for she sought for solitude in which to commune

with her own heart, to prostrate herself at the throne of Mercy, and intreat divine aid and guidance in the new and difficult path which she perceived to be before her. Believing the great duty of woman to consist in the practice of forbearance, meekness, and humble endurance, the prayer of her heart was that in her "Patience might have its perfect work."

When Stancliffe returned, he was gloomy, dispirited, and evidently either angry or ashamed; sensations which alike tend to make a man appear sullen when the former is suppressed, and the latter unavowed. Dora concluded that he had seen her father, and she naturally wished to know what had passed between them, and made every possible excuse in her mind for the ill-humour her husband was still affected by, but she did not venture to ask any questions.

At length Everton began to make eager enquiries respecting Arthur Sydenham—his person, manners, situation, expectations, and intimacy with her, all passed in review—the answers of Dora were all dictated by that simple truth which left no pretext for anger, and no shadow of doubt on the score of that jealousy her mother's declaration had temporarily

awakened. Stancliffe was not a man subject to feeling this passion much; for his personal vanity was considerable, and had a natural tendency to render his errors rather those of self-confidence than of suspicion:—he was also apparently conscious of the nature of his own faults, for their conversation ended by an assurance "that the kindness and patience she had evinced towards him at a time when he was terribly annoyed, should never be forgotten by him:"—he lamented with much feeling the errors of his early education, which had nurtured the faults it ought to have corrected, from which he had become irritable when opposed, but maintained, "that gentleness never failed to disarm him." To this Dora replied by an assurance given with firmness and solemnity, "that she would always endeavour to subdue all anger in herself, and consider his vexations as flying storms, which it was her duty to bear:"—she would have added her hope, "that he would endeavour to gain that self-conquest so necessary for both," but such was the generosity and delicacy of her nature, that she would not, in the moment of humiliation, utter one word on the subject beyond what was necessary—she could neither

at this period doubt the power nor the will of her beloved, to rectify his errors, and of course render her as happy as she could desire.

But though Stancliffe thus professed to be merely a petulant man, whose passions subjected him to the ebullitions of rage, blameably indulged, but speedily removed; it soon appeared that he added to this, *abiding resentment;* and although Mrs. Hemingford had truly observed, " that he had little to complain of, in finding his wife rich when he had expected her to be unportioned," he yet continued to dilate on the secrecy, insincerity, and *intentional fraud,* of his wife's family, in a manner which was extremely painful to her, and drew upon them those animadversions from others to which no one ought to expose their connections :—if Dora ventured to excuse them, he reproached her for it, as arguing affectation, " since it was not in the nature of things that she could love them," or accused her of ingratitude to himself, who had proved the *sincerity* of his regard, by taking her without a portion.

Had he said " the *violence* of his passion," Mr. Stancliffe would have used a much better term

for his feelings towards Dora, whom it is certain he would at one time have purchased at any price, and whom he continued to gaze upon with very considerable admiration. They were now receiving company, and he so far conceded to Dora's wishes, as to permit her sisters to be generally with them; but it appeared as much with a desire to place Dora above Catharine, and thereby vindicate his own taste, as from a wish to oblige *her;* and the direct, or indirect sparrings, which took place constantly between two persons of their description, rendered every day a period of trial to Dora.

Scarcely had she been married two months, when other letters arrived from Smyrna, by which they learnt that the necessity of a resident partner at that place was so apparent, as to threaten the ruin of the house if it were delayed. Stancliffe laid them before Dora, observing "they only confirmed the former."

"I will go with you any where, my love," was the immediate reply of his young wife.

"But I am not inclined to go:—our articles of partnership are equally binding on your father—and in short, he must go, and shall."

"I am afraid his health will suffer—it is too

late in life for him to change his climate and his habits, whereas, you are accustomed to it; my dear, pray think, before you decide."

"I *have* thought—I *have* decided—either he shall go, or find some other person to lend him money on his bond, than the fool he sought to cheat and circumvent."

Stancliffe was as good, or rather as bad, as his word; and Mr. Hemingford was compelled to see clearly that he must set out immediately, for his partner still held him in his power:—indeed it was evident, that as he had now no other stay but his business, he must preserve it; whereas his youthful partner had the means of life should the other fail.

Bitter were the lamentations this resolution caused in the family of Mr. Hemingford; but to no person perhaps was the trial felt, so severe a one as the father himself, since he saw that parting with his boy was for the child's sake inevitable, and his heart had been so long attached to this, as the *one* object on which his affections rested, and to which his hopes clung, that the loss of him appeared a pang almost as terrible as death.

When every thing was finally arranged.

Mr. Stancliffe's heart evidently softened towards the suffering family; and he not only readily agreed, (according to Mr. Blackwell's proposition,) that Frank should form a part of his family, but gave an invitation to Harriet, also, upon her leaving school, and seconded every contrivance suggested by the active good will of Dora for their assistance and accommodation, with a liberality that rendered him exceedingly dear to her. This was indeed the kinder, because she had been compelled to see that, although hospitable to profusion, and occasionally capable of squandering money, yet Everton Stancliffe was not generous in general, and very frequently he was careful even to parsimony.

This great change was felt by Frank with various sensations; he was loath to part with his papa, whom he tenderly loved, but he was so much more attached to Dora than to any human being, that he could scarcely be sorry for any circumstance which placed him under the same roof with her—he was also inclined to love his brother-in-law, for he admired him exceedingly, and with the curiosity natural to his age, was delighted to hear him relate circumstances, or describe places connected with

his travels; but yet Frank was also a little afraid of him, and could not perfectly forgive him for having taken away his darling sister.

Though few daughters could have less to regret than Dora, yet the deep consideration and pity, which led her to oppose their departure so far as she dared, continued to affect her; and she bade them farewel under great depression of spirits, in which her father evidently partook, as he was extremely agitated, and repeatedly recommended her to the care and love of her husband in the tenderest manner, together with Frank, who was not present at their departure, lest his health should be injured by the stimulus given to his sensibility.

The disorder under which this poor boy laboured, and which had proved fatal to his brothers, was the occasional rupture of internal blood vessels, by which his life was frequently placed in danger, and his general health rendered extremely delicate, though free from pain and particular complaint. On this account he could never be trusted at school, or with any assemblage of children, since play would inevitably be fatal to him, nor could he be subjected to reproof except

very gently administered, since a fit of crying might in his case become fatal: his life was necessarily dull, and his attainments few; but he was a child so full of kindness and intelligence, so grateful for attention, and so humble from a consciousness of dependance, that he seldom gave occasion for reproof since he had been under the guidance of Dora, and was generally an object of pity or affection. The more than feminine delicacy of his complection, and almost ethereal slightness of his form, aided by his mild blue eyes, and a profusion of pale brown ringlets, that flowed over his face, gave an idea of angelic beauty in his person, at the same time that they bespoke the fragile tenure of a life that was in perpetual jeopardy.

The first care of Mr. Stancliffe was to remove to the late dwelling of his partner, on account of its convenience as a house of business; and he appeared to enter on the duties which now rested solely upon him, with the activity and ability for which Mr. Hemingford had ever given him credit; but this zeal was of very short duration. Accustomed to indulgences inconsistent with the daily routine required, as soon as he became busy, it might

truly be said he became indolent; for although he entered with avidity into all extraordinary duties or pleasures, because they necessarily proved his powers and excited him to exertions, he sunk without that stimulus into positive inaction—he must do great things, or do nothing at all.

Yawning away the morning on a sofa, and making late evenings in gay parties—never seen on Change, seldom visible in his counting-house, always willing to invite the foreign merchant to dinner, but never ready to receive his commissions, or attend to his shipments—trusting all to servants, yet treating them with a cold *hauteur* which rendered them averse to his person, and indifferent to his interest, Mr. Stancliffe in a very short time changed the tide of public opinion, and private prosperity; and those who had pitied the young man who was tied to a partner whose extravagant family had reduced his property, and injured the credit of the house, now maintained that to the services of Hemingford alone it had been indebted for stability, and that as the elder Stancliffe had gained money through *his* diligence, the younger must preserve it by the same medium, or lose it.

In the mean time Dora attended to her duties with that quiet, but unremitting vigilance, which is ever effective; and finding that she could not, consistent with the situation she filled in society, indulge her love for reading and drawing, (which she held to be the greatest pleasures of life,) she gave herself up to those pursuits most agreeable to her husband, whose pleasure it was that she should be a busy housekeeper in the early part of the day, and frequently take a part in musical performances with parties in the evening. Mr. Stancliffe's mother had been much of a cook, and although her situation in life had placed her above the necessity of such employments, had, partly from a desire of pampering her son's appetite, and partly to fill up the vacuity of time, (heavy to an unfurnished mind and undirected taste,) engaged herself much in culinary employments; and from her example, her son concluded that all good wives ought to do the same, as he had now ceased to gaze on Dora's complection, or examine the form of her fingers, and the pinkyness of her palms, he thought her cool hands might be well employed in pastry, of which he was particularly fond.

To win his approbation, and feel rewarded by his smiles, was the first apparent object of Dora's life; but yet it is certain, that her heart was silently engaged in higher hopes and expectations. She trusted that her own activity would be the stimulant to his, and that her meekness and self-controul, in the petty vexations and unceasing crosses, which happen in every establishment, would lead him to endure those thwartings of circumstances, which every man in business must submit to; and her gentle admonitions to Frank were frequently of such a nature as to awaken him to the exercise of the talents she praised, but she never presumed to give advice, much less to remonstrate, with her husband.

Two hours in the day she constantly dedicated to Frank, who had also masters to attend him, and now began to make rapid progress in his education, which Stancliffe aided much by praise, saying frequently, "aye, my boy, I will soon have you in the counting-house —I will make a man of you by and bye," words which Dora construed into general encouragement; but she learnt with surprise and almost dismay, that he really intended to place the poor child there, so soon as he could be

rendered in the least degree useful; and upon her proposing to engage a person to supply her place to him as a governess, when the task became too laborious for her, she was assured "that it was wholly unnecessary, for that her sister Harriet might supply her place to him. These were not times in which to increase the expences of the family beyond what the necessity of the case required."

From a young husband, about to become a father for the first time, these words were cold, and almost harsh; and the heart of the young creature to whom they were addressed, sunk, as she recollected that she had no mother, or friend, to whom she could look for comfort or assistance, at that awful period which every woman trembles to encounter, and which calls imperatively for all the aids of kindness, and the supports of consolatory love. The provisions made by a husband for the accommodations of his beloved wife, and the expected claimant on his tenderness, may be pardoned for partaking the character of extravagance, but never ought to diverge in a contrary direction.

Happily for Dora, she was herself so disinterested and generous, that it was scarcely

possible for her to conceive the opposite principles could operate in the mind of one she loved; and frequent as the proofs of meanness and selfishness in Stancliffe's conduct had already been, she generally imputed them either to deficient consideration, or a habit contracted from circumstances with which she was unacquainted. She contrasted the trifling saving he now attempted, with the expence he had perhaps incurred the day before; and not being aware that those who are the most covetous, may from the same cause be the most profuse, concluded, that when her dear Everton did wrong, it was from chance, (either in saving, or spending,) whenever his action could be construed into good, she registered it as proceeding from principle and disposition.

If ever man could be flattered into virtue, Everton Stancliffe appeared likely to become that man; for unconnected as his wife now was, her talents and her conduct, (aided undoubtedly by her person, manners, and reputed fortune,) had drawn around them a circle of respectable and accomplished persons, whose good opinion he was desirous of preserving; and although his passion for Dora had declined, his esteem for her, and his desire of

holding his place in her affection, rose daily. He was proud of being appreciated by a person of her discernment, and that vanity which had formerly led him to seek distinction for his personal advantages, or those accomplishments which attract the eye, now turned a little towards more worthy objects; and those faculties with which he was eminently gifted by nature, were partially applied to objects worthy of their powers.

Though subject to indolence, and habituated from his cradle to self-indulgence, yet few men were more capable of either mental or bodily exertion than Stancliffe; he had the power of being rapid without confusion, and of comprehending quickly, and yet proceeding systematically, to any given point. His memory was singularly retentive; and whatever he had taken the trouble to learn, whether momentous or trifling, was so fixed in his mind, that he could always bring it into action. From his father he had acquired the knowledge necessary for great gains, and bold yet not gambling speculations:—from his mother, he picked up a habit of petty savings, inconsistent with his situation in life and his general habits, but which to the short-sighted looked

like prudence. Altogether, there were those ingredients from which a clever tradesman, an useful member of society, and a very agreeable companion, might be extracted, could they have been amalgamated with religious integrity of principle, well regulated sensibility, and domestic affection.

In the first weeks of his married life, Stancliffe had paid his young and lovely wife attentions which bespoke the violence of his passion, since they proved that he really thought more of her than himself:—the admiration she excited in society, for a time continued to render her an object of his care, because she was one of his pride, and even at the time when he had most wounded her feelings by reflections on her parents, or quarrels with the servants, during the former part of the day, in the evening he hovered round her with the pride of an admirer, and the tenderness of a lover—he felt her value as his own property, and was delighted to display his own advantages in her beauty and accomplishments.

But as passion for her person declined, and the novelty of exhibiting her lost its charm, Everton Stancliffe relapsed into his former self,

a character in which Dora had never beheld him, since love had from the first day of their acquaintance given to him its own ameliorating traits, and transformed a clever, but conceited and petulant young man, selfish in his feelings, and obstinate as passionate in his temper, into a gentle though impatient suitor, who, in subduing one passion for the gratification of another, obtained the praise of generosity, to which he had in fact little pretension, since the welfare of her he loved was no further considered by him, than as conducive to the interest he sought to obtain in her affections.

Dora of course saw none of these things—she loved, for the *first* time, an apparently amiable young man, who had in his person, manners, and mind, every qualification necessary to excite the regard of an intelligent and tender heart, thrown upon the mercy of any one for that kindly intercourse from which it had been cruelly separated. It is, however, certain, that the trials of her father's house were of great use in preparing her mind for those she soon afterwards experienced in the temper and disposition of her husband; since they enabled her to perceive that life in ge-

neral is very different from that she had known at Crickhowel, and that the religion which she had been taught to embrace there as the great support of virtue, and the consolation of the afflicted, must henceforward be rendered an active principle, constant in its influence. Every lesson she had received from Mrs. Aylmer rose to her mind, and she endeavoured to benefit from them; but they rarely applied to any situation in which she found herself placed, save as the guardian of Frank, for Mrs. Aylmer as a wife had been very differently placed, nor had her path in the world in any way resembled that which was chalked out for her beloved *protogeè*. Yet her return to England, her presence, her support, her advice, was soon looked to by Dora as the greatest of all earthly blessings, for she felt the want of a friend, sometimes of a protector, since the heart on which she sought to lean, refused or eluded the burthen.

CHAP V.

STANCLIFFE was in the situation of being half persuaded to do right, from liking the praise which attended it, and also the profit likely to accrue from it, when letters were received from Mr. Hemingford, which plainly indicated how valuable his presence had already become, since they contained important remittances, and guaranteed orders to an amount which roused the young man into instant activity, by awakening not only his love for money, but for pre-eminence as a mercantile man.

Dora rejoiced in the change; for although she would have been most thankful if the even tenor of her way had never been broken in upon by commercial concerns, and certainly had no love for money beyond its real uses, yet she justly considered a life of idleness as unworthy a rational being, and especially disgusting in a young man. She thought, too, that the sensibilities of the heart were frozen

in that state of apathy produced by indolence, and that love and kindness would return with those exertions which set the spirits in motion; and although she was extremely unwell, (and in particular anxiety on Frank's account,) she yet paid the utmost attention to all the subjects on which her husband expatiated, and assumed the utmost interest in all his movements.

Their letters were succeeded by visitants—the same vessel which brought these despatches conveyed also a Mr. and Mrs. Masterman, who had been the intimate friends of Mr. Stancliffe during a considerable part of his residence abroad. The gentleman had been a well-meaning but somewhat visionary schemer, who after various plans returned poorer than he set out in pocket, but according to his own conception, so much richer in knowledge and experience, as to ensure the making of a rapid fortune in his own country. He was a plain kind-hearted man, a generous, confiding, and most affectionate husband, generally too much absorbed in his plans for the future, to pay further attention to his domestic concerns than to provide liberally for the many wants of his beautiful and all-commanding wife.

Mrs. Masterman was that dangerous character in society, a married coquette, which she assumed under an appearance of prudery, so artfully managed, as to deceive the most wary; and every man distinguished by her smiles, gave himself credit for having been the only one who could touch a heart so guarded. She was married when very young, from a humble station in life, and being uneducated, unattached, and remaining childless, had possessed an unhappy leisure which she could only employ in ornamenting her person, which was very handsome, and in amusing herself by practising those lures which render beauty most fascinating to the susceptible and thoughtless. Exercise of power had its usual effect; she became proud, tyrannical, and frequently malignant, towards others; and was, in her turn, a slave to passions it was the great and distressing business of her life to indulge and to conceal. No stage Abigail in the old comedy could be more a woman of intrigue; but with ability to which they could form no pretence, no shepherdess in a pastoral poem preserved a more innocent exterior or greater purity of deportment.

On her first arrival at Smyrna, Mrs. Master

man had distinguished Everton Stancliffe; and as circumstances threw them much into society together, and she was the admired of all eyes, his vanity could not fail to be gratified by her simplest approbation. He was considerably younger than her, (although her ceaseless cares prolonged the reign of beauty,) and his admiration of her person was not that thraldom of the senses, and bewilderment of the judgment, she had been accustomed to awaken—she became piqued into a resolution to perfect her conquest, and would unquestionably have carried her point, but for the sudden removal of her husband, and the necessity she was under of accompanying him to Aleppo.

On her return, Stancliffe was gone to England, and thither she determined on following him; and although generally true to the *interests* of her husband, if false to him in other respects, (like the wife of Belisarius,) she did not hesitate to sacrifice them in the present instance; and by working upon his affections from feigning indisposition, she prevailed on him to give up his prospects and the remuneration of past labours, and return suddenly to his native country.

The voyage restored her health, and reanimated her beauty; and she burst upon Stancliffe with all the advantages of an adept in the art of charming, at a time when his wife was inevitably looking ill, and was languid in her spirits though not dejected, of course unequal to the amusement of a man whose temper varying perpetually, either required a companion who could perform for his pleasure the part assigned, or listen in mute attention to him. He was pleased with the accession of company, as offering variety, and was doubly pleased to receive it in so fair a form as that presented by the arrival of Mrs. Masterman.

The gentleness of Dora's manners, the polished simplicity, and the genuine warmth of her hospitable reception of the strangers, who brought with them letters from her mother and sisters, really delighted Mr. Masterman, and half disarmed his lady of those designs she had conceived against her domestic happiness; the more especially when she perceived that her own person and dress were regarded by Stancliffe with the admiration and homage she intended them to exact. Mild, and insinuating in her manners, of penetrating mind,

and stored with observations which supplied the place of reading, and were communicated with a vividness of colouring fresh from the life, her society was delightful to Frank, and scarcely less so to his sister, who was mortified when she refused to take up her abode with them altogether, and gladly assisted in seeking lodgings as near to her own house as possible for her temporary home.

A very few days sufficed to render Dora happy in the belief that she had now secured the friend she had long desired; but a few more told her that her husband, not less happy than herself, gave up to the strangers that time which was now of the last importance, and that the hours spent with Mr. Masterman in consultations on his affairs, or in shewing the neighbourhood to his lady, were really too valuable at this particular time even for friendship to demand. Every day she hoped that a person so truly friendly as this lady appeared to be, would herself see the propriety of setting him at liberty, and that as she evidently could say more to him than any other person, she would give him advice to this end. Mrs. Masterman did not do this; but when in

confidential conversation, she urged it on her young friend as a positive duty.

"Really, dear Mrs. Stancliffe, you ought to speak to Mr. S.—I know very well that if the goods are not sent out immediately, your father will be in the greatest distress, and the prospects of the house are now so great, that you ought not to allow them to be lost from his inattention."

"I hope he will do every thing, indeed I am sure he will; he is very active, and does more in a day, than many in a week, and our clerks are all very industrious."

In fact, it was impossible to make Dora say one word that could irritate the husband, which had been the pious intention of the lady, not but she wished him to attend to his concerns, even whilst he was attending to her, for she wanted him to get money in order to forward her views in the disposal of it, and at length addressed him with—

"Would it not be possible for you to make that baby of yours useful in the counting-house? her father boasted much of her talents in that way to Masterman, I remember."

"Oh, no! at least not at present, in her

situation ;—the whole town would talk about it."

" I would make her do it, nevertheless, and the town should be no wiser—what is her paltry income? nothing, certainly, that should prevent her from a little exertion at a particular time like this, for a husband who has been supporting her family for years."

Stancliffe knew the conclusion of this speech to be as false as the beginning was impertinent and cruel; but he had resigned his judgment to this woman, who saw her power over him, and determined to use it to the utmost; she was offended with him for daring to marry after she had honoured him by encouragement, and was bent on revenge. But she had a two-fold point to carry; she wished to secure him in her chains, and to render him the partner of her husband; by this means she could enjoy his fortune and his society, and at the same time render his domestic uneasiness at once the punishment of his faults, and the medium of attaching him to herself, from whom alone he should receive his pleasures.

If we did not *know* " that such things were," we would not present such a being to the contemplation of the unvitiated mind; but, alas!

there are *many* such syrens in the world, and the young and inexperienced of both sexes should be warned against them:—this was not the first house where Mrs. Masterman had thrown the brand of discord, whilst she entered with a smile on her lip, and the language of friendship on her tongue; but it was certainly the first in which she had failed to render the wife an offender against her husband by using words of exhortation or reproach, which when most merited, man never fails to resent from his weaker partner, and to consider his excuse for even flagrant error.

In a short time Dora's dressing-room became the scene of labours she entered into with avidity, but was ill able to execute, hoping from day to day, that the evening would repay her labours by words of praise, and deeds of kindness, from Everton, who was now, at the instigation of Mrs. Masterman, really very busy. But unfortunately, she ever failed of this reward; he was too fastidious to be satisfied, too weary to inspect, or in too great a hurry to get out; "it was very hard indeed upon a man to be teazed in his own house, when he had been fagging all day as he had done."

The very first day he was at liberty, he announced an intention of setting out immediately for London.

"Yes," said Mrs. Masterman, "we are all going together, my dear friend, depend upon it we will take care of him."

"But he cannot go," said Dora, with a deprecating look, "at present, Mrs. Masterman, for I am very ill."

"Indeed! and you want him to make your caudle?"

"Do not laugh at me—it is certain I wish for him very much—I have been doing my utmost to assist him, and I had hoped—besides, how can *he* be happy leaving me in so critical a situation?"

"I will *not* leave you, Dora," said Stancliffe, with warmth, "not for the world."

Dora looked towards him with eyes full of glistening gratitude, but in doing so, she caught an expression of anger in those of Mrs. Masterman, which astonished and confounded her; she knew not what might previously have occurred, but in the present happy state of her feelings, she could not ascribe it to any thing now passing, and she therefore added,

"I was in hopes, too, that you would have been with me, my friend."

"Perhaps I may—like all wives, I must depend upon the will of my liege lord."

Dora well knew this assertion was not strictly true, for in all things she had observed this lady carried her point; and although Mr. Masterman, in his tall athletic form, conveyed the idea of an important personage, it was yet certain that he was completely under the management of his sovereign lady, who appeared born to reign a queen over all of his sex whom she deigned to consider her subjects.

Dora retired to her room, and soon became so ill as to summon her attendants; yet she was sensible that loud words were passing in the parlour she had quitted; soon afterwards, her husband ran up stairs, and rushing into the room *sans ceremonie,* said, "good bye, my love—I find I *must* go, take care of your self —ah! doctor, are you there? good bye, good bye."

He vanished; and for a moment Dora felt as if the stroke of death had fallen upon her, a pang far beyond the mere loss of his presence

at this moment, rent her heart, and opened her eyes, and she perceived herself abandoned for *another*,—that other, the woman she had loved and confided in.

Terrible as this affliction was, and rendered doubly severe at this trying period, yet for a season it was necessarily forgotten, for there are times in which the most weighty concerns of the mind must bend to the distresses of the body; but who shall describe the mingled sensations, the very agony she felt, when her boy was placed in her arms, and she remembered that his father had forsaken them both in the hour of suffering, and robbed her of the tender reward which nature designs for every mother—that of presenting her offspring to its parent.

Long and bitter were the tears she now shed; but the remonstrances of her attendants were listened to, and she endeavoured to calm her mind, and to excuse her own weakness, and the apparent unkindness of her husband, whom she desired Frank would write to immediately. Although a thousand recollections of circumstances indicating the more than friendly attentions of her husband to Mrs. Masterman sprang continually to her mind, as if to rival

the pains that had left her, yet she opposed to them, with all the strength she could, a determination to believe him innocent of actual or intentional guilt; and like most wives, she was more inclined to lay error at the door of his seducer, than of him. The expression on Mrs. Masterman's countenance was ever present to her eye, as indicating anger with him for a promise she had afterwards prevailed on him to break; and she justly judged that her husband had allowed the struggle his heart had held between them, to terminate in favour of her rival, who was probably now rewarding him for his desertion, by means which could not fail to produce future infamy.

How did she long to fly after him, to beseech him to have mercy upon himself and her, and the child she had borne him!—what torrents of eloquence seemed to spring to her lips for such a purpose, and how fondly did she dwell on his promise to remain,—a promise which, although broken, implied intentional kindness, in which a patient and tender heart could find food for hope, and reason for perseverance in love.

But the distress she had suffered, and the solicitude which she could not conquer, neces-

sarily affected her health; and though she struggled to appear cheerful, and even jested upon her own childish wishes for the presence of her husband, (lest the jealous uneasiness of her heart should betray itself to those around her,) the consequences too soon appeared, she became alarmingly ill, and her infant partook the disorder.

The overwhelming sorrow of poor Frank at this juncture may be easily conceived; but his tender watchfulness, presence of mind, and care in procuring assistance, were beyond his years, and gave him a new interest in the hearts of all who offered their services on this melancholy occasion. To the great satisfaction of their friends, Mr. Stancliffe arrived before it appeared possible that he had heard of her danger.

The unexpected pleasure of his presence operated as a cordial on the sinking wife, and obliterated all her late fears and suspicions; and the cheerfulness of her reception, the rapidity of her amendment, effaced the circumstance as a matter of blame from the minds of those around her, who now considered that it was indeed very indispensible business that had compelled him to the journey. Yet there

was a constraint and uneasiness in the manners of the husband, which indicated a heart little interested in the circumstances so momentous to him; his spirits were evidently in perturbation, but it was not that of anxiety as a husband and a father.

In a few days after his arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Masterman also returned, and the lady soon paid her respects to the invalid in the stile their acquaintance warranted; and in the ease and openness of her manners, Dora not only conquered all remaining anxieties and suspicions, but in the generosity of her heart sought to make her amends for having dared to think ill of her; though she could not acquit her of having caused her to be treated unkindly by her husband, yet she felt the action as proceeding from a very different cause from that which her jealousy had assigned. Sincerely did she thank God that her husband was innocent, and firmly did she determine never to condemn herself again to such suffering as her suspicions had caused her to endure.

Every thought of her heart was read in her ingenuous countenance, and unsophiscated manners, by the woman whose natural pene-

tration had been improved by experience, and who in the present case could not hate *her* whom she determined to use as a creature subservient to her views, and conducive to her interests. With an air of secrecy she informed her, "that their sudden journey had been taken to secure something of great importance to Mr. Masterman, which could not have been possibly done without the intervention of Mr. Stancliffe, who would probably be some day the better for the kindness he has shewn him—in fact he has been bound for him, and is, I believe, going into partnership with him, but pray do not give a hint that I told you. Men are all fond of keeping their own secrets, or divulging them their own way; but I could not forbear telling you, because it must be evident to you that Stancliffe has something on his mind."

"Yes, I have perceived that he was very absent, and I did not know what to impute it to, since I have been so much better."

"Well, that is the matter, so now be easy—we have already been the cause of so much uneasiness to you, that although I am under promise not to speak of it, yet I could not help it."

"How could I so wickedly wrong this woman?" said Dora to herself; "but how happy a circumstance it is to reflect upon, that I had the resolution to keep my foolish thoughts to myself—never can a wife be too careful in concealing the errors of her husband, much more should she conceal her suspicions."

The first time Dora dined down stairs, Mr. and Mrs. Masterman were present. She did not feel quite her usual cordiality towards the former; but he admired her little boy, and she forgave him:—he talked much of the business into which he was entering, and shewed his hopes, his difficulties, and expectations, with an openness, candour, and simplicity, which marked at once his honesty, enthusiasm, and false estimation of circumstances common to projectors. Dora trembled for him, and was extremely uneasy for her husband, whose usual quick-sightedness seemed to fail him on this occasion, as he listened to the golden dreams of Masterman with considerable approbation; but his manners were still indicative of uneasiness, and his first pleasant look was assumed at the moment of her departure to the nursery.

Stancliffe was new to deception, and he was indeed at this time unhappy; his proud and

fiery spirit was curbed by that cowardice which is inevitably connected with guilt in young offenders—his mind was busy and uneasy, dissatisfied with himself and all arouud him, yet unable to seize an occasion of venting his vexation, lest he should betray the guilty secret that preyed upon his heart.

The following day, he thus addressed the wife whose love and confidence were at this time so tormenting to him, as to render his request less a desire than a demand.

" You are now well, I think a journey could not hurt you?"

" It will not hurt me, my love, if the child can bear it."

" Pshaw! the child—I suppose that is to be made a reason for every thing—but you may take it with you into Cheshire, I wish you to visit Mr. Blackwell, and persuade him to advance me two or three thousand pounds."

" He is a stern man, you know, my love, and will ask a thousand questions."

" I know it, which is the reason I send *you*, instead of going myself, for I am aware that I should fly out and ruin all—you must tell him the prosperous state of our business, which you understand sufficiently to prove;

and say, that he may repay himself by withholding the income he now allows us, or settle the matter as he pleases; but I *must* have the money."

"Cannot I write all this, my dear?"

"No—your personal appearance, and even that of your boy, are a species of security to him—had you both died, (which appeared likely enough a fortnight ago,) all would have gone to Frank—such is the d—d way in which old women make wills."

The cold, heartless way in which Stancliffe adverted to her death, struck Dora as careless even to cruelty; but she resolved not again to condemn him causelessly, and she sought in the readiness of her obedience, to embrace a disagreeable journey, on a disagreeable errand, to earn that approbation, and win that kindness, so dear to her heart, and so necessary to her happiness.

A nurse, a babe, a young wife, were very extraordinary visitants at Blackwell hall, and excited no small degree of astonishment in the antient housekeeper, and venerable butler; but there are few hearts so dead to the early and sweet sympathies of our common nature, as not to behold them with pleasure. Mr.

Blackwell received Dora after his first exclamation of surprise, with a courteous, but sincere welcome, and handed her into his house with an air of fatherly protection, which soothed the agitation of her spirits, and somewhat compensated for the fears which had harassed her during her journey, which being more than fifty miles, had also been too much for her in her present convalescence.

Every person, and every thing, under the roof, were soon put into requisition, for the accommodation of the guests, and for the first time in her life Dora was treated as a gentlewoman of importance. Mr. Blackwell soon learnt that she arrived as a suitor to him for money; but he neither by word or look, indicated any thing repellant, although he placed an interdict on all business till the following day, intreating only "that she would command his house in such a way as might most conduce to her health and comfort."

Poor Dora had unlimited permission to lengthen her visit from a husband who had conceived that her commission would be one of difficulty, and who was also glad to be delivered from the burden of her presence, to which he could not in the present state of his

mind accustom himself. Although wearied and somewhat indisposed on the following day, she had the satisfaction of writing to Stancliffe the consent of Mr. Blackwell to advance him two thousand pounds on the terms proposed, to mention his hospitable reception, and heartily wish that he were present to partake it, that being the only circumstance wanting to her happiness.

The change of scene was rendered extremely beneficial to Dora, in consequence of the airings Mr. Blackwell took her over the estates of her late godmother, anxious to shew the improvements he had made by enclosures, fences, and buildings, which although they had necessarily encroached considerably on the present produce, would fully justify his expenditure. He also took her to the house occupied by Mrs. Dorothy, which though smaller than his own, was well calculated for a country gentleman's establishment, and was kept by its present occupants in a state of great neatness and thorough repair, and beautifully situated in the midst of an old fashioned garden, enriched by avenues and terraces, from whence it looked on a wide-spread smiling country. The eyes of Dora swam in tears, (but not of

sorrow,) as she thought of the happiness to be enjoyed in such a place, far from the cares and the fictitious splendour of cities, with leisure for the duties and the pleasures of her early life, the friend of that life for her guide and companion, and her husband turning his mind to objects of useful and rural occupation, the friend of the poor, the admiration of the rich, the example to all.

"I must have patience," said Dora internally, "I must take the apostle's advice to 'labour and not faint,' and never to be 'wearied in well doing.'"

Dora spent the Sunday following with her kind entertainer, and at church renewed the engagements and holy resolutions of her soul, so lately injured by sorrow, and worldly anxieties. Her heart was at once purified and lightened of its load of care, and the freedom she enjoyed from all present pressure, gave her spirits that elasticity they needed, restored her health, and bestowed strength to run her arduous race anew.

CHAP. VII.

Mr. Blackwell himself conveyed Dora and her attendant in his own coach the first two stages of her journey. On parting, he regretted much that her husband had not given her the meeting, but added, "I suppose the same painful necessity which induced him to send you *alone* operates still; he deserves to get rich, for he makes, in my opinion, great sacrifices to that end; but pray, my dear young lady, exert your utmost influence to guard him from extending his concerns too far, that is the error of all Liverpool men, and indeed the error of the age: tell him also, to exchange the hunters he is too busy to exercise, for a carriage, in which his wife and child may really receive benefit, as well as himself."

Dora well knew that she dared not deliver the latter part of this friendly message, but she meditated all the rest of the way on those circumstances connected with the former; and considering it her absolute duty to speak

on the subject, determined to do it even at the risk of that anger which was the object of her greatest earthly fear, and which nothing of less importance than the welfare of her husband could induce her to venture upon.

" But he will not be angry with me *now*," said Dora, as the carriage drove to the door, and she folded her child in her arms; and the conclusion would have been deemed a just one by all who saw her, for never had she been so lovely—never had her countenance beamed with so sweet an expression, nor that exquisite complection, which had first attracted his eye, shone with such pearly whiteness, such glowing roses.

Stancliffe was just going out at the moment when she alighted, and he not only started at the sight of her, but the colour sprang to his cheek—" he loves me," said Dora, and her heart beat with delight, as she seized his arm and hastened into the house.

" I did not expect you this hour; I was stepping up to Masterman's, he will be waiting for me."

" The idea, " perhaps *she* will be waiting," darted through the heart of Dora; but she repelled it, and said gaily, " well, my love, let

him wait a little while, he is too gallant to take you from a lady—besides, you have no idea how the child is improved, every day makes him more like you, look at him."

Stancliffe looked at his boy, and even kissed him, but his eyes reverted more frequently to the mother, and he said again and again to himself, "how well she looks! how handsome she is!" he even sate down, as if to partake her tea, but the striking of the clock reminded him of his engagement, and he rushed out of the house without speaking.

Hour after hour passed, and he returned not—ah! who can tell, save her who has thus waited, and thus counted the lapse of time, how heavily it passed to poor Dora at a period when her spirits were excited by circumstances, and overflowing with love and joy—when she had the power too of presenting her beloved husband with a certain property, and of describing that which awaited them, and which was more desirable than any thing of which she had formed an idea. It is certain there are many injuries more tangible than unkindness and neglect, but there are none which are felt more acutely, or which the wounded spirit bewails more bitterly; and though we

are all apt to complain the most of those slights inflicted upon us in the hour of sorrow, and think ourselves justified in registering them as worthy of resentment, yet we feel them severely also on other occasions, for the joy which a beloved connection refuses to share is from such a cause turned into sorrow.

Poor Frank was unwell, and had retired before her arrival, and she would not permit him to be disturbed—she could not read or work, and several times she resolved to wrap herself up and step to Mr. Masterman's herself, but she dreaded exciting an idea that she was suspicious or of shewing that like her husband she could not live without constant intercourse with them—her reverie was dissolved by the entrance of Mr. M. who merely called to give the servant a newspaper, but hearing she was arrived, stopped for a moment to welcome her home.

"Have you then not been at home?" said Dora, in surprise and inward alarm.

"Not for some hours—I had an engagement, and not expecting you so soon, desired Stancliffe would come and play chess with Mrs. M.; you know I never leave her for an

evening without providing her with some amusement, they are both great players, and do vastly well together."

Whilst he spoke, Stancliffe returned home, and after he was gone, Dora observed, "that she was so much a stranger to every thing down stairs, as it was six weeks since she left the parlour, that the evening had passed very slowly, she had been nearly wrapping herself up and coming over the way to them.

"I should have been exceedingly angry if you had."

"Angry!" said Dora, faintly.

"Yes, very angry, it would have been highly improper, and what I certainly should not forgive."

The tone in which the last words were uttered was silencing, from its loudness and asperity; and Dora was left to consider whether the impropriety spoken of was relating to the state of her own health, (in which case it was a kindness,) or to the liberty of intruding uninvited, on a woman who was a constant visitant at all hours in her house; but under any circumstance she could not fail to see that a decided preference was given to the company of Mrs. Masterman, and that to contribute to her

amusement was considered paramount to the duty of cheering one who had so lately been a sufferer, and still more lately, a supplicant for his convenience and that of his friend.

The following day, Dora laid the money upon the table, and in a playful, yet somewhat impressive voice, repeated the admonition of Mr. Blackwell.

" 'Tis all very fine, but I shall grow rich as soon as I can, in spite of master Blackwell's old saws. I have no doubt of his cheating me as much as he can, and I shall therefore do my best to keep things even by my own gains."

" Oh! he is a just, good man, I am sure he is."

" You are a judge, undoubtedly, Mrs. Stancliffe—an upright judge, but rather a *young* one—certainly one that may be deceived, even out of the evidence of your senses."

" Perhaps I may," said Dora, with a sigh.

" I *know* you may."

" But that money, my dear—is it to be put in the bank?"

" It is *not*. I am going into partnership with Masterman, and this is a *part* of my capital."

" Pardon me, dear Everton, but allow me

to tell you that I listened with great attention to Mr. Masterman, and I thought his scheme one that must be a long time before it answers."

"So it will, undoubtedly—it is certain no ghost need come to tell us that."

"Then why should you engage in it who have already an excellent business in your hands, requiring all your time and more than your capital? why should we, whose property must increase in a few years so materially, be harrassed with new schemes, when the old and certain ones are more than equal to our wants, and which must tend to destroy all ease and pleasure, in the best days of our existence? you know, my love, you do not like exertion, and how excessively our last hurry annoyed you."

"That is true; but I have *promised* Masterman, and I am under great obligations in that quarter that you know nothing of—and in short"—

"If you are under obligations, repay them, my love, if you can, but not by so terrible a medium as becoming a partner in a concern you do not understand, and cannot manage, and which for some years will demand money

you cannot furnish, and prevent you of course from pushing the excellent mercantile business now so flourishing—here are the bills, my love; lend them, nay, give them to Mr. Masterman, if you like, I give them up freely for that purpose; but pray, *pray* do not become his partner,—it will harrass you to death."

The intense anxiety, the glowing affection, the subdued, yet earnest tones, in which Dora addressed her husband, quelled the anger and contempt with which he at first regarded her, and was about to oppose her interference. He felt that she was right; and it struck him that the best thing he could do would really be to pay off the money he had been bound for, and make an end of the business by advancing that sum. He set out for that purpose; and this offer would have been gratefully accepted by the husband, but on the wife finding that the proposal had originated with Dora, with that determined ambition to triumph over *her*, which had already been exercised at the risk of her own ruin, she set eagerly about thwarting her wishes and contrived to stimulate the avarice of Stancliffe so adroitly on the one hand, and alarm him

with the fears of discovery on the other, that he finally signed the deeds of partnership, and thus became doubly her slave.

"Alas! he has no resolution," thought poor Dora, as she shook her head at the sad prospect this folly had opened to them; and the conclusion was but too just. There was a natural inconstancy in all Stancliffe's feelings and pursuits, which checked alike the progress of virtue in his conduct, and prosperity in his affairs:—he had left his business in Smyrna *half* established, and his late commission from thence would have been only *half* got up, if the cares of his old clerk and his young wife had not completed them. He liked the bustle and importance, but he hated the fatigue and perseverance called for; and even his love for money, which was really great, failed in imposing on him any task that wearied him, or curtailed his pursuit of pleasure and love of ease.

From this time Mr. Stancliffe lived more in the house of Mr. Masterman than his own; yet *that*, was either directly or indirectly, managed entirely by Mrs. M. whose pleasure it was to tie the young mother entirely to her nursery, to controul her expences

in every particular, and not only subject her to restrictions, but lectures upon her domestic economy, alike unnecessary and insulting. The husband was, however, made the medium of all his suffering partner's mortifications, and Dora felt them only the harder on that account, since she understood that every act of grace towards *her* was always accorded, " because Mrs. Masterman thought it right, or had the goodness to recommend it:"—the proud, the irritable Stancliffe, was supple as a glove on the hands of his mistress, though unyielding as iron to the wishes of his wife.

This woman had now become established in the best society of the town; and by the plausibility of her manners, and the perfect union which subsisted between her and her husband, at least suspended censure, and generally defeated scandal. There was an air of affection in her manners to Dora in company, which deceived casual observers, who sometimes expressed surprise at the cold, estranged air, of one who even in her meekness could not bend to the dishonesty of feigning regard. But Dora was now little seen—her child pined beneath the distresses which silently consumed the mother's heart, and her

affection really tied her to the nursery where her enemies wished her.

But this retreat was by no means so dull and uninteresting as might have been imagined, for Frank was an intelligent, as well as affectionate companion; and as reading was at once his sole employment and amusement, his mind had become stored with a variety of information, which he was proud to display for the amusement of a sister who supplied to him all the relations of life, and fulfilled all his ideas of excellence. Sensible that she was not properly treated, he had yet the delicacy and good sense never to wound her, by adverting to it; and happily he was a stranger to the nature of that influence which was in full operation against her peace. Many a time did Dora struggle for his sake to appear cheerful, and even gain in the effort much of the composure she sought; and although there were times when the silent tear would not be repressed, and poor Frank would as silently wipe her eyes and his own, till the overflowing grief of each had subsided into pensive calmness, yet most probably on the whole, they suffered much less than the guilty pair, who were the cause of their sorrow. In

the perpetual labours of Mrs. Masterman to act two parts in life, joined to the irritability of her own temper, and the violence of Stancliffe's, there was a solicitude, toil, and anxiety, that wore her constitution, and injured that beauty, which was to her an object of idolatry;—even the gullibility of Dora had its inconvenience. She was perpetually suspecting that she was suspected; and the calm dignity of endurance, the Christian patience of Dora, which was indicative of forbearance, not ignorance, kept her in perpetual alarm, even while she presumed upon it. Free from all religious scruples herself, she had no criterion in her own mind by which she could judge how far another could be influenced by them; and she continually feared that Dora would be throwing off the mask of submission she supposed assumed for a season, and expose her openly. She could not conceive that a women could exercise so much patience, and meekness, in the hope of hiding the faults of her husband from the world, and eventually restoring him to the paths of virtue; still less suppose that she could receive those consolations from on high, which enabled her to sub-

mit to the injustice of man, as a chastisement permitted by God.

Orders again poured in from her father, and again Dora, (notwithstanding her cares as a mother,) was placed in requisition; and as she was now fully aware that nothing less than the most active care could answer in their situation, she exerted herself to the utmost. It was an object with her to remain as much behind the scenes as possible; but the absence of her husband, the necessity of personating him at some times, and his own anger when she had failed to do it, all compelled her to come forward; and of course she became an object of remark and pity.

To obviate this consequence, Mrs. Masterman adroitly and industriously spread a report, "that Mrs. Stancliffe, young as she was, had unfortunately contracted such a love for money, and had such an overweaning affection for her own family, that poor Stancliffe could not prevent her from interfering with every thing which promoted her darling objects.—She was so saving, that she had never allowed him any company at home since she became a mother; her whole house was under rules

of economy the most ridiculously rigid, and it was evident to every one who saw her at church, that she had bought herself no clothes since her bridal ones :—she was a sweet young woman in her person and manners, but Stancliffe was much to be pitied, for he was of a very different disposition :—poor man! he would be quite lost, if it were not for the comfort he enjoyed at *her* house in the society of her husband."

Under this view of the case, it occurred to Stancliffe, one morning after losing a game at billiards, on which he had betted considerably, to be consoled by an allusion to his wife's love of money. The subject was a delicate one, because Stancliffe well knew that whatever might be the services he required from Dora, her personal wants were never attended to; and that under pretext of curtailing her little charities, she had even been kept without any money ;—conceiving, therefore, that to be reproach which was meant for condolence, he replied with asperity, on which the speaker observed—

" I meant no offence, Mr. Stancliffe; Mrs. Masterman, who knows much better than I do, whispers every where about your wife's

covetousness—she says you never get a good dinner but in *her* house, and a great deal of that kind of thing."

Stancliffe was already heated by his loss, and the current of his vexation immediately turned against the woman who, not content with heaping wrongs on the head of his wife, thus sought to defame her, not seeing (in the blindness of his anger) that the accusations against Dora, were in fact promulgated to assist his character and protect her own. He flew in his rage to Mrs. Masterman, accused her of speaking ill of Dora, and added, "that it was a liberty he never would forgive, and less from her than any one."

The lady was justly astonished, and perhaps justly offended also, since the gratuitous scandal she had spread was intended for his benefit; and as it had long appeared a tacit agreement between them that their respective partners were to be sacrificed in any way for their mutual pleasure, she could see no reason for this troublesome start of conscience. She apprehended, that it rose in fact from the youthful charms of the person defended; and her rage arose in consequence, words begat words, and in the midst of those violent bick-

erings which unbridled passion produces between persons who are devoid of esteem for each other, as much as self-command, Mr. Masterman and a commercial acquaintance entered the room.

The guilty pair were in a moment silenced; but Stancliffe was fully aware that words had reached the ear of Mr. Masterman, and what was worse, of his friend, for which he could not fail to call him to account, since he would probably draw those inferences which his own sense of guilt led him to dread.

Accustomed as he had long been to witness the extraordinary *finesse* of the lady, he yet feared that her present passion would subdue her accustomed cunning, and that her desire of inflicting vengeance might even subdue her fear of future punishment:—in overwhelming confusion he suddenly retired, and hastened to his own house.

Dora, after many hours of close application, had dispatched her letters, attended to her child, and was dressing for dinner on his bolting into her room, evidently in terrible disorder; she let her gown fall from her hands, and stood trembling before him, in the expectation that she had failed to obey some of

the many injunctions he had poured on her at breakfast time.

Thus in *this* world, must the innocent often tremble before the guilty:—but we forbear comment.

"Dora," said Stancliffe hastily, "I have been making a sad fool of myself,—entirely on your account;—I have quarrelled with that infernal woman,—Mrs. Masterman, I mean."

Dora half smiled.

"It is no jest, I assure you:—that dolt, poor Masterman, came in, and another person with him, so that he will be obliged to look into the affair, for madam is so completely on the high ropes, she will not condescend to cajole him—heaven defend me from such a fury!—we quarrelled entirely about you; therefore you must get me out of the scrape."

"I will do any thing in my power—surely a man may be pardoned for speaking too strongly on behalf of his own wife, if that were your fault."

"It was, entirely—but, Dora, people do not quarrel as we were quarrelling, *unless*—it strikes me that this silly fellow will become suspicious, that he will probably seek you,

and question you—now you never *were* jealous of any thing improper, you know."

Dora was silent.

"You never were jealous, surely?"

"Stancliffe, look at these thin arms, this wasted form, and these pale cheeks—they are my answer."

"You do, indeed, look very ill; very different to what you were; but I did not think it arose from that—I have been a wretch, a fool, a madman—what will become of me? I see you will not help me, nor can I ask you."

He struck his clenched hands on his forehead, burning tears started into his eyes, the fear of shame, and the consciousness of folly, so wounding to pride, seemed to rush upon and rend his heart. Dora, in scarcely inferior distress, threw her arms around him, and sought to soothe the frenzy of the moment by every suggestion her mind could furnish for that purpose; and at length proposed going herself, to offer apology on his behalf to Mrs. Masterman, for his temper.

"No," cried Stancliffe, "I will die first—I would rather fight him a thousand times—in fact, if fighting were all that were required

I should be easy—but it is other things which torture me."

He threw himself in agony across the bed, hiding his face with his hands.—"Alas!" thought Dora, "this is not a cause for which a man should risk his life—surely it is my duty in such a moment as this, to do any thing, every thing, that can avert these horrors; I must conquer all pride, all repugnance —I must submit"—

A gentle tap at the moment broke upon her startled ear, as if it were a summons to meet some terrible disaster; she opened the door, and beheld Frank.

"Mr. Masterman and another gentleman, have been examining me just as if they were lawyers; they asked me such strange questions, you can't think, sister."

"What questions?" said Stancliffe, jumping up and gazing on the boy with terrific eagerness.

"They asked if you were very passionate?"

"Well! and what did you answer?"

"I said, prodigiously."

"Um—um, that was right; go on."

"They said, did you speak cross to my sister, *i. e.* were you rude in your speech, for-

getting she were a lady?—I told them, when you were in a passion, you always expressed yourself in a very violent manner."

"True enough—go on."

"They looked at one another, and said, that was very satisfactory; which I thought very odd."

"Well, did they go away?"

"No, they asked me if you loved my sister; and I said, to be sure you did."

"You are a very good boy, Frank—very good indeed"

"I thought it a silly question, for every body must love Dora, and especially her husband; but they said again, it was very satisfactory, of course you would write a note of apology, and went away, talking about what fools men made of themselves; so I came up stairs to tell Dora, because I did not think it was at all handsome of them to ask me such odd questions."

Frank retired, and Dora falling on her knees, in the accents of revived hope and deep gratitude, thanked God for the relief she felt from the severest sense of sorrow and terror she had ever experienced. Stancliffe's own heart was deeply moved by a sense of mercy

extended to him, when he was on the very verge of destruction, and when he felt the arms of his innocent and injured wife clasped around him, and heard her in the most gentle manner beseech him "to use the present moment for effecting a total liberation from his enslaver, and thus proving his sincerity and thankfulness for the present escape;" his heart was melted, his tears flowed freely from penitence and love, and he promised far more than even Dora had requested.

So soon as the agitation of this trying scene subsided, Stancliffe wrote a note, intreating the pardon of Mrs. Masterman for the violence he had been guilty of, but added, "that since the cause could not fail to affect his mind, and render him liable to repeat the offence, he had determined to deny himself all future opportunities of offending, and restrict his intercourse with Mr. M. to their unavoidable connections in business."

When this letter was dispatched, the writer felt as if a mountain were removed from his breast, and a film had been plucked from his eyes; but he had not the courage to look back upon the conduct which had rendered his home unpleasant, and his wife indifferent to him—

he could not endure the pain of reflecting upon the cruelty of his own inflictions on the kind and tender heart of her whom he had bound himself to protect; nor would his pride confess, how worthless had been his compensations for sacrificing his wife's happiness, his own ease of conscience, and chance of disgrace, and the sense of having injured the man who trusted him, and whom he had placed in actual possession of his property. Stancliffe, in flying from his seducer, and escaping from the infamy which was his due, lost the salutary effects of punishment, and in returning to his happiness, conceived himself to be meritorious; hence a transaction in its own nature awful, passed over him with little actual improvement to the heart, even whilst it beneficially affected his conduct.

Accustomed, herself, to all the subterfuges of cunning, and alarmed beyond all former fears, Mrs. Masterman saw only in his conduct the same effects which had agitated herself, and doubted not, when his fears had subsided, that he would contrive some means of seeing her, and condoling with her on their mutual sufferings; but when she found that he still kept aloof, that he had the insolence

of remaining at home, or walking out with his wife, and even paying her the most affectionate attention, her rage became unbounded, and would have led her to the most fatal excesses, if it had not been tempered by that self-love which was her ruling principle, and told her that revenge might be more effectually secured by time than violence.

Mrs. Masterman, at one period, had despised her paramour for the very facility with which she had moulded him to her will; but she was now become fond of him, and would have given the world to recall him. Judging by her own feelings, she concluded that her empire over him was the same it had been; but this was far from the case, even before their rupture, and since then, as the present fascination of the senses had ceased, all regard for her had vanished, and memory never presented her in any other view to his mind, than as a woman who had misled him for the purpose of inveigling him into a convenient partnership with her husband. Thus doth sin graft sorrow on the vices it has planted.—Innocence hath no need to seek vengeance for the injuries it may receive, they rarely fail to be punished even where they escape detection.

It had been so self-evident that Mr. Masterman's business could be carried on in London much better than Liverpool, that he had wished for some time to remove thither, but was prevented by the remonstrances of a wife to whom he always yielded, and a partner whose interest gave him a right to dictate. In order to prove her own power, Mrs. M. now advised their removal earnestly, in the full persuasion that Stancliffe would refuse his consent; but to her bitter mortification, she found, through her husband, that he approved the suggestion, and sought so earnestly to forward their scheme, as to offer to settle all the private debts of Mr. Masterman in order to facilitate it.

Caught in her own trap, the lady resolved that Stancliffe should pay dearly in the accommodation he offered, for the final separation he thus inflicted; nor was she without the hope of renewing that acquaintance in London precluded by circumstances in their present situation. She set out with avidity, yet left behind her debts to an amount so far exceeding all the calculations of Stancliffe, as seriously to distress him, and add to that distress, by the natural belief, that when

thrown at so great a distance from his cognizance, she would not fail by her expences to involve both her husband and himself in one common ruin.

Stancliffe revealed his difficulties and his fears to his wife; but whilst she consoled him under his trouble, for the first time she could not sympathize in his pains. Such was the relief she felt from the removal of her insidious rival, that no pecuniary sacrifice seemed too great to offer as an equivalent; and as Dora had never looked upon the partnership with Mr. Masterman in any other light than as a yearly drain to the purse, and an increase to the labours of the house, so she was prepared to receive her share of the burden without surprise, and sustain it without complaint. Such was the cheerful activity with which she renounced projected pleasures, and actual indulgencies, so willing was she to look on the bright side of dark affairs, and improve those which admitted it; to save, or to gain, wherever her assistance could be applied, or her wants dispensed with, that Stancliffe roused himself to action and to self-controul, and in assuming his duties, at once lost the sense of his vexations, and helped to restore his losses.

Amongst the various ways in which his late enslaver had exerted her influence over him in directing his household, one had arisen which only now became acted upon. Stancliffe had a great aunt, Mrs. Judith Everton, a single woman, far advanced in life, whose fortune, though not large, was more than sufficient to her wants, which were now principally those of an aged invalid. She had many years resided with two maiden sisters in a neighbouring village, the daughters of an apothecary, whose scanty gains had left them so narrow an income, that Mrs. Judith was to them, as a liberal boarder, a person of great importance. No one could be more happily situated than she was with these worthy women, who were skilful in administering to all her wants, patient in attending to her verbose and garrulous conversation; and from long habit, and naturally affectionate disposition, really attached to her person:—it was evident that it was their interest to be kind to her, and preserve her as long as they could. It was also evident, that Mrs. Stancliffe had more than sufficient employment for a woman moving in her sphere of life; since in addition to her cares as a mother, which were naturally

increasing ones, she had the charge of a brother, whose health ever hung on so slender a thread, as to make him, even in his best days, an object of unceasing anxiety; and her excellent abilities rendering her occasional exertions of importance to her husband, who was also very fond of company, how was it possible she could give attention to any other inmate? Yet it had entered the mind of Mrs. Masterman, that by providing such a constant tic as Mrs. Judith Everton would be, on the attention of Dora, and that by placing an inhabitant in his house who could hardly fail to be disagreeable, she should the more effectually bind him to herself; and, regardless of any other consequence, she determined to effect a removal which was alike cruel to all the parties concerned.

The avarice of Stancliffe was stimulated by the profusion of her, who, in prompting him to deny necessaries to his wife, did not fail to draw expensive presents for herself—he was told, "that the old lady would leave her property to those with whom she should end her days;" and, "that as he was her legal heir, it was a duty he owed to himself and his child, to secure it." That his wife, already confined

to the duties of a nurse, might as well add another subject to her infirmary, and since the income paid for her and Frank had ceased, even a trifling substitute was of value—besides "when a wife was tied to the house, she could spend nothing out of it."

This advice was acted upon, and the dutiful nephew was properly seized with a great desire to contribute to the comfort of his great aunt, a desire the more effective perhaps, in that it had never been exhibited during his whole life before. Mrs. Judith did not think of removing; she had not discovered that her situation admitted of amendment; but when it was kindly pointed out to her, no wonder that a mind never strong, and now diverging to childishness, suffered itself first to be persuaded, and then become eager for change. The sisters modestly urged their claims; but finding they were disallowed, insisted only upon that notice of three months which in such cases was deemed regular; to this Mr. Stancliffe yielded, and that term having expired, the old lady was now expected to claim her new home in the house of her relation.

Before then, it is certain that Stancliffe had seen his error in this arrangement, and also

that at this time the representations of Dora, who had always disapproved this plan, would have been listened to. But Mrs. Judy had set her heart upon it; her place had been supplied to the family she quitted, and alas! money was become an object; and thus every circumstance combined to transplant her into a new soil, when she was least likely to take root there happily; when not only prejudices, and partialities were irrevocably fixed, and habits confirmed, but mental imbecility had thrown a veil over her faculties, which forbade the formation of that esteem and veneration which ought "to accompany old age."

CHAP. VIII.

At the appointed time, Stancliffe himself brought Mrs. Judith Everton, and her indissoluble companion, a little pug-dog, justly named "Fury," to their future home. As she had resided at a distance of seven miles, Dora had not yet seen although she had paid her all the respect save visiting, which was in her power. The excuse of a drive to see her, at a time when Dora was confined, (for the sake of securing the company of the favourite,) had led to those serious changes which now took place.

A time had been, when Mrs. Judith was very good-looking; but she was now only very fat, and very good-tempered, if we except an unreasonable dislike to all children, and an unnatural aversion to all cats. When her age of dressing and dancing was past, she entertained a passion for reading, and considering novels either as unworthy of her dignity, or injurious in their tendency, she

abjured them altogether, and became an historical reader of immense magnitude, sweetening this solid fare by all the fashionable poets of the day, whom from henceforward she quoted and misquoted, with all the facility incident to a prodigious but ill-directed application. Age, and a slight paralytic, had, about four or five years before this period, unhappily deranged the mighty mass of knowledge and lumber which occupied her brain, and turned the whole into a confusion the more lamentable, because from that very period she was observed to talk much more than she had ever done before, and to thrust dates, facts, and characters, upon every person she came near, in proportion to the utter worthlessness of the commodity. To this faculty, she added also a great taste for turning all she said into doggrel rhymes, for aiming continually at making a pun, or a jest, which she repeated perpetually for the whole day, as too good a thing to be lost sight of for a moment. Her late complaint, and still more an early habit, occasioned her to pull hideous faces, by way of being humourous, so that unhappily poor Mrs. Judith's wit was every way terrific, though certainly melo-dramatic, for if it did

not tell to the ear, it never failed to seize the eye.

"What a dreadful time have I gone through, we have been five hours on the road!" exclaimed Stancliffe.

"I am very sorry you have had so bad a journey, my love," replied Dora; "but you have not left home five hours; where is your aunt?"

"Oh! she is unpacking, and will roll in by and bye; bow, wow, wow—confound that eternal dog, I will shoot him before the week's out."

"Don't say so, dear Stancliffe," said Dora, as she tripped away to welcome the stranger, whose round, portly form, feebly supported by Lilliputian feet, was slowly sailing through the hall, followed by the servants, and preceded by Fury, whom she essayed to soothe by an assurance that the change he experienced was all for the best. "Don't bark, Fury, that's a good little dear; don't you see, it's the very house that your grandfather, that is, that my nephew's grandfather intended to build—I suppose you prefer the country, Fury, and to be sure I grant,

'Pathless hills and shady groves,
'Places which pale passion loves,'

are very pretty; but then you ought to know, Fury, 'whatever is, is right.'—Oh! dear, how do you, Miss? a very pretty creature, indeed; poor Mr. Hemingford's little girl, I dare say."

"Mrs. Stancliffe, my dear madam; but you are quite right in supposing me Mr. Hemingford's daughter, pray take my arm, and allow me to conduct you."

"Yes, yes, I remember now—Everton told me the fair lady whom I called the princess of Babylon,

'The lovely Thais by his side,
'Who languish'd like an eastern bride,'

was not the actual, but only the ostensible wife—you know, my dear, there is an *actual* and an *ostensible*, (Fury, Fury,) as the Roman emperor said:—bless my life, is'nt that a child?"

The last words were accompanied with a start, on seeing her nephew rolling with his lovely little boy, (whom Dora had popped into his arms when she ran to receive her,) upon the carpet.

The child was sent to the nursery—Fury

accepted a snug place on the hearth-rug, and Dora made tea, whilst Mrs. Judith adjusted her ample form in the great chair, but never ceased her speech; for though frequently varying in subject, the same perpetuity of sounds, either in prose or verse, continued to break, generally uttered in soliloquy, but always addressed to some person so pointedly, that they must be heard, whether comprehended or not, and *seen* also, from the grimace and contortions, with which they were accompanied.

"That's right, my dear, pray send it away; children are poor little dears, that's certain, too *dear* for me to buy, ha, ha, ha, do you like puns? that's what I call a good one—too dear for me to buy—but not too dear for you; but I hope you will have no more; my niece, Everton's mother, had only him, and he is but a little one:—you need not toss your head, my dear nephew, for it will not make you grow—you were always handsome, but by no means tall enough for my taste, which always inclined to a man of stature; had I ever given up my virgin affections, it would have been to Ajax, or Androcles, or some other of the angels in Paradise Lost:—a little man may have great faults, and a great man little

faults, ha, ha, ha, what do you say to that, my dear ?"—

Trembling for her husband's politeness, Dora interrupted Mrs. Judith, to enquire after the ladies she had left, the Misses Lawrence.

" Oh ! they are very well, only a little low at parting ; for we have lived together twenty-seven years this very Michaelmas-day, and eat our last goose together of poor Miss Sally's stuffing, as she said, crying all the time."

" Ah, truly !" said Stancliffe with a deep sigh, " 'twas a thousand pities to divide you."

" So it was, my dear nephew, in one sense, for I hate to think of parting ; it reminds me always of the pathetic farewell of sixteen-stringed Jack :

' Adieu, adieu, my dear Miss Roath,
' Since Tyburn tree must part us both.'

now I call hanging a really affecting circumstance ; but I am fond of every thing elegiac. I said to Sally this morning, (by the way, 'tis her birth-day, she's forty-five, owns to eight-and-thirty, and grows the colour of a dried marigold, which is just the case with all thin women,) I said to her ;

' The goose thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
' Had he thy reason, he would fly away.'

" So will I," cried Stancliffe, starting up; and casting a significant glance at Dora, he instantly left the room.

" My dear sister," said Frank, casting a look full of pity on Dora, " what will become of *you?*"

" I know not;" said Dora, with a pathetic sigh.

" So! that is your brother," interrupted Mrs. Judith. " I remember, now, my grand-nephew said there was such a person, and that we should be charming company; and so we shall, for I can tell him all about the Greek emperors, and the Roman kings, and the knights of chivalry, and the battles of Alexander the Great, on the Po, and the Danube, and all the rest of the places—ah! my dear, you will find me excellent company, and so improving, which is the great thing for young people. Whenever your sister is engaged, now you will always have me to look to, which to be sure will be a great matter for you—you are not a child, exactly, which is the reason I like you; if all children were as big as you when they were born, it would save a monstrous deal of trouble; or if people would have them when they grew old, and had

nothing to do but play with them, 'twould be all very well; but really it is mighty silly to spoil their best days with them, as many people do; master Frank, don't you think so, my dear?"

During this harangue, the speaker had seized on the hands of poor Frank, who, unable to struggle, and anxious to follow the example of Stancliffe, feebly appealed to his sister's aid by the exclamation of "Oh Dora!"

"At the word," accoutered for all encounters, Mrs. Judith began again to harangue.

"*Dora* you call your sister, my dear boy, that is not the proper diminutive for Dorothy —no, no, that is Doll, or Dolly; I amused your brother-in-law, my grand-nephew, that is, Mr. Stancliffe, who is just gone out, Everton, as I often call him, he being the son of my own niece; well, I say, I amused him all the way here with telling him how well we should agree together, and making verses about it; I said in this way:

'Judith and Dolly,
'Will quickly be jolly.'

then I brought my little dog in, which you know was very proper, because we are never

long parted; and then my verse was longer, it ran thus:

> 'Fury, and Judith, and gentle Dolly,
> 'Will never more be melancholy.'

the word gentle, my dear, is what is called an epitaph—epitaph! no, that's not the word."

"Epithet, ma'am, you mean, and proper enough for my sister."

"True, true, my dear; I knew it was epi-something: aye! few people have read one half so much as me; I have Addison and all the antients off by heart: now sit down, and I will tell you about the nymph Egeria, and how she lived in a cave."

"I know it all, ma'am, indeed I do."

"And what Augustus said about a man and an elephant."

"Oh! ma'am, I know it very well."

"And about the triumvirate, and Oliver Cromwell, and the siege of Troy, and William Tell, and Robert Bruce, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the death of Leonidas, and king Charles the martyr, and—why, child! you shake your head at every thing."

"I know all those things, indeed, ma'am."

"Well, but my dear boy, say nothing on

the subject; hear what Young says in the Night Thoughts:

'Be silent always when you doubt your sense,
'And listen unto me with diffidence.'

if it isn't Young, it's Milton; who is a monstrous favourite author with me. I have got every one of Satan's soliloquies off by heart: poor Sally Lawrence always called them my devilish speeches. I believe the poor dear thought them as long as his tail, and as hard as his cloven hoof, for she was a bit of an ignoramus. I said to her, says I, my dear miss Sally, if ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise, dear miss; for I always make a rhyme—they will have such a miss of *me*, I'm sure my very heart aches to think of it, and I say,

'Then ages hence, when all my griefs are o'er,

what's the next line, my dear?

'When this rebellious tongue must speak no more,'

replied Frank:

"Very true, my dear; then comes in something about singing and bringing, and sighing and crying; it is all very fine, and what they call 'immortal verse,' my dear, which means verse that will last for ever; you understand master Frank—the proper way to make it, is to do as I did with your sister's

name, to say Dolly, choly, folly, jolly, and so on; but after all, if people haven't a natural genius, they never make out much. I do honestly believe I was born with just the same genius I have at this moment—the Evertons had all geniuses—there was my brother Tom laid out a garden like nobody else; and my aunt Sarah, who lived in queen Anne's time, raised a Yorkshire pie like a castle. Dick Everton, my father's sister's eldest son, spent a very handsome fortune in finding the longitude; and I can assure you, little Stancliffe here, my grand-nephew, who is just gone out, drew a globe before he was your age, all over with hieroglyphics, like Sir Isaac Newton's Copernican gravitations. In short, *genius* comes one knows not how, and goes one knows not where:—'tis untold the times I have said that to Sally, and Miss Lawrençe too, day after day; but you see comprehension lies in the brains, and if people can't comprehend because they happen to have no understanding, it is not possible to put these things into them—now, there's Lavater's system, have you heard about that?"

"Pardon me, ma'am, if I insist on sending my brother to bed, he looks very pale, and

every degree of excitement is so bad for him that I am really obliged to be positive," said Dora.

Frank escaped like a bird from the fowler, and Mrs. Judith herself protested that it was bed time, and after taking the toast and negus, which constituted her supper, retired with the maid appointed to attend her. As her motions were necessarily slow, Dora heard her voice all the way up-stairs, pursuing its customary task; and it was not till after her chamber door had closed, and the sound ceased, that she could venture to congratulate herself on the relief her jaded spirits had long earnestly desired.

If, when the wearisome hour was past, Dora could have beckoned her husband from his hiding-place, such was the sweetness of her temper, and such the submission to circumstances she had acquired, that she would immediately have dismissed her chagrin, and even found herself rewarded by his presence; but to her grief and alarm, many wearisome hours followed before Stancliffe made his appearance; and when he came, it was evident that he had not spent a sober evening in the house of an acquaintance. He spoke as one

half intoxicated, and whilst he inveighed with bitterness against Mrs. Judith, he yet expressed no compassion for the wife to whom he had assigned her as a companion, and whose avocations, spirits, and situation, every way ought to have exempted from a task which those only were calculated to endure who had been by degrees habituated to the evil, and held her conversation in the same light as the loud clicking of a clock to which they had ceased to attend.

Alas! the history of one night was that of many; and Dora, again bereft of her husband's society, had the farther mortification of finding that his evenings were spent generally in a manner which incapacitated him for exertion in the day, and that he became, though less violent in his temper than when under the immediate promptings of a wicked and artful woman, yet morose, stubborn, and to her unfeeling, as to others rude. She was aware that his spirits were oppressed by various causes, especially the demands made by Mr. Masterman for increased advances for his hitherto unprofitable concern; but he again ceased to make her the confidant of his affairs, although she was the necessary par-

taker of his troubles. Cold in his manners, severe in his house-retrenchments, and daily assuming the sternness of age, whilst he allowed himself all the licence of youthful pleasure, it would have been impossible for Dora to have borne up against the complicated difficulties by which she was surrounded, and have preserved that equanimity which distinguished her, if her mind had not had one subject on which her heart could dwell, and to which it could have recourse for temporary comfort. This was the expected return of her first and only friend, who had now been absent the full term she proposed, and in all her late letters had spoken of her health as re-established. Yet this hope was rather the refuge of a distressed heart, that like the wandering dove sought for any resting-place, however slippery and untenable, than the hope of happiness beyond the pleasure of welcoming one dearly and justly beloved. Dora could not bear the idea of Mrs. Aylmer seeing Stancliffe her still beloved, though erring husband, in his present state of conduct; and she was well aware that his circumstances could not be concealed from her; yet from the pain, and the shame attending both discoveries, she ar-

dently desired to save both herself and her friend, conscious as she was that a few more years of toil and privation, would place her in ease and even affluence. On the other hand, she flattered herself, that the great respectability of Mrs. Aylmer's character, the superiority of her mind, the maternal rights she undoubtedly had in *her*, and even the expectations which she blushed to remember her husband often hinted at, might altogether influence him so far as to suspend his present habits; and she hoped, that as he had been restored to her when held by a stronger spell, she might reclaim him more effectually from a weaker:—she hoped—what will not woman hope for him to whom her heart still clings, worthless as he may be? and as the green tendril imparts its own freshness to the withered spray round which it winds, so does she impart to him a portion of her virtues, hiding the deformity she cannot cure, and delaying the destruction she seeks to avert.

At length a letter in the well-known long-loved hand, with a Dover post-mark, was received, announcing Mrs. Alymer's return to England, and her intention of visiting Liverpool before her settlement at Crickhowel or

any other place, but lamenting that there would be a necessity for her to stop some weeks in London. Dora shewed this letter to Stancliffe, not only with the pleasure awakened by good news, but with that enquiring gaze which sought to read how far it was agreeable to him, and with the desire to found upon it a request for the money necessary to provide various little accommodations in which her house was at this time deficient. Stancliffe, like the deaf adder, refused to hear, even the voice of a wise charmer:—the usual answer to every petition of this nature, had long been either an exclamation of astonishment at what she could possibly do with the money he gave her, an assurance that he should keep his own accounts, or a volley of oaths accompanying a supply so trifling as to be mockery to the mistress of such a house. Yet his own common out-of-door's expenses plainly called for cash of which he always appeared to have plenty, and therefore though he undoubtedly had great difficulties in affairs of magnitude, it was evident that he did not personally encounter those daily wants, those petty, but pressing grievances, to which he constantly exposed his wife, and which are undoubtedly

a species of trial which subject their victim to indignities, mortifications, and impositions, of such a nature as to equalize her situation with that of the wife of the day-labourer, who literally wants bread. He is unworthy the name of *man* in either situation, who voluntarily subjects the woman he has bound himself to protect to such misery.

In the present case, Mr. Stancliffe had not recourse to any of the above methods of refusal:—after assuming the appearance of deep reverie for some minutes, he said with that gentleness which never failed to affect the heart of his wife,

"My dear Dora, you must want money for many things, certainly, nor can I do without it—you must go over to old Blackwell again, and get something out of him—he will not refuse you."

Dora shook her head, with an air of doubt.

"I tell you he will *not*;—he will see you are again in the family way, of course increasing my expenses; he will be aware that Frank grows bigger every day, and remember that this year I have no income for either of you, and—but in short, I want a thousand pounds immediately, and I *will* have it."

"Let us go *together*, my love, and I have no doubt you will obtain it, although it is certain there could not be a worse time for landed property to produce it."

"I will not go; I hate that man, and I won't submit to his prosing humbug, or answer his impertinent enquiries."

"But I promised him, you know, that"—

"Promise! *you* promise, indeed! what is the promise of a married woman worth, think you? he is lawyer enough to know that your promise of a single shilling by no means ensures your powers of payment, and by the same rule, that your actions and your petitions are equally under my governance:—you must go, that is resolved; so you may ask the old woman for a little money, and send William to take you a place in the coach to"—

"Indeed, my dear, that will never do; for the last words Mr. Blackwell said to me, were the hope that when I came next I should be in my own carriage."

An outrageous flood of abuse followed this declaration, though made in the most humble manner, and for the express purpose of facilitating the errand on which she was sent:—when the ebullition had exhausted its rage,

and the speaker's strength, he then confessed that "it was necessary to keep up appearances," and even proposed, "Frank as her companion in a post-chaise, as the roads were fine, and with her care the journey might be as serviceable as amusing to him."

Dora durst not venture on this step, though she felt the want of a companion, and dreaded leaving behind one who would be unquestionably considered her representative, in all cases where ill-humour sought a vent, and required an object. Frank intreated her to keep up her spirits, gave her his especial promise, "that he would watch the child, and listen to Mrs. Judith, and take care of every thing;" adding, in a whisper, "and if my guardian should send me another note, pray take it yourself, dear Dora."

Dora's eyes filled with tears, not less of affection than memory, when she recalled to mind how long it was since the poor boy had received any pocket money, and how entirely his little store had been expended on her and her child, to whom he had become attached so fondly, that she doubted not he would supply her presence to it. She endeavoured, by

thinking on objects so precious, to beguile the way, and gain courage for an interview which she dreaded, as considering her errand degrading to her husband, and shrinking from the investigation connected with it, and the first interview justified the presentiment which had oppressed her.

"Either your husband is doing well, or ill, in the world," said Mr. Blackwell sternly, in reply to her application—"if *well*, he cannot want money for the support of his family at a time when its claims are very limited—if *ill*, it would be folly to throw away more money upon a losing concern; I feel myself justified, therefore, in adopting the course I gave you reason to expect I should, in case of a second application, so irregular and unprecedented."

"Our principal business is doing exceedingly well; the other, though unproductive, is full of promise, and has ceased to require a farther capital. I am really warranted in saying this."

"Um—um—yet you evidently labour under an artificial poverty, as distressing as the sad realities I see around me. I am sorry

for it, but I cannot relieve it; I have already done too much, since it has answered no end."

Dora started from her seat, her hands clenched, her eyes full of tears, as her lips almost involuntarily exclaimed,

"Surely, dear Sir, you will give me something; I must not—that is, I cannot"—

"Say rather, Mrs. Stancliffe, you *dare not;* for that is the word struggling at your heart —you dare not go home again without money."

"Oh, no! indeed, Sir, you mistake," said Dora, a quick blush passing over her pallid countenance, and receding as quickly, for she felt faint, and threw off her shawl.

Mr. Blackwell cast his eye over her slight form and somewhat altered shape—her flushed cheek and fevered lip, bespoke the inward struggle of a heart resolved to hide its sorrow lest it should betray their author, yet too deeply moved, and naturally too ingenuous to effect its purpose; and his soul was touched with the tenderest, the sincerest pity—the stern accents, the harsh features, ceased to appal her; and her late alarm was turned into astonishment, on seeing the tears gush from

his eyes, and feeling that he had taken her hand, as he answered,

"My poor girl, you shall not be so circumstanced, nor will I wound you farther by questions which could give me little information—I know more than enough already, and will give you the money you ask, though it is very inconvenient and improper."

"God bless you!" exclaimed Dora, as her over-pressed heart took refuge in tears that would not be forbidden to flow.

Mr. Blackwell had been surprised that he could feel so much; but he was not less so on reviewing the tránsactions of the day on his pillow, when he remembered the powers and attractions his guest had displayed, when her anxiety being eased, and her agitation subsided, she had in gratitude exerted herself to amuse him through the evening by conversation, notwithstanding her past fatigue and recent solicitude. In the warmth of her affectionate description of her brother, her delicate endeavours to introduce her husband favourably, the playful good-humour with which she touched on the peculiarities of Mrs. Judith, and the lively regard with which she adverted to Mrs. Aylmer, she displayed

to him those treasures of the heart and the understanding, (those gems which are woman's only valuable treasures,) and which rendered her in his opinion so attractive, as to leave the husband who could slight her, much less misuse her, without excuse. The retirement in which he lived had prevented him happily from hearing many reports ; but he had been displeased with the appearance made on her first visit, was alarmed by the second, and determined the following spring to investigate further. Not only the letter, but the spirit, of his guardianship demanded him to attend to every thing connected with her happiness ; and although love diverted into new channels will not return to refresh the soil it has deserted, nor can the unkind, or the vicious, be melted by reproof, or reformed by admonition, yet power to check open misconduct ought to be used wherever it exists ; and since guilt is always cowardly, refractory spirits may be shamed into quiescence, where they cannot be moulded into goodness. We may neutralize the acid we cannot sweeten —such was evidently his duty.

Though poor Dora only returned with the precise sum for which she had been sent, yet

her own consciousness of the difficulty she had inwardly experienced in prosecuting her errand, the pain she had suffered, and the gratitude she felt, induced her to believe that her husband could not fail to accept the money with thankfulness and pleasure, that would have the most beneficial effects on his mind and conduct. She persuaded herself, that all which had of late been to blame in him had arisen from uneasiness, which would now subside; and busied herself with various plans by which Mrs. Judith should be amused without intruding on him, and looked finally to the arrival of her beloved friend, as an event which would not fail to place every thing on the happiest footing.

Thoughts, it is true, would intrude, which told her "that the first visions of her heart were dispelled, that she had been deceived in her estimate of Stancliffe's character, that her views of happiness were blighted, her affections misplaced, as well as trampled upon;" but these thoughts were treated as intruders. Dora struggled against them, prayed against them, and by turning her mind resolutely to consider the blessings which she really possessed in her lovely child, and her interesting

brother, she succeeded in dispossessing them, and reached her home in that happy frame of mind which disposed her to receive her husband with ardent love, and meet her family with her usual kindness and complacency.

CHAP. IX.

When Dora drove up to her own door, she became sensible that the house was in great confusion, as there were lights in many rooms, and people running about in all directions.

The fears of a mother are easily awakened, and as the little boy was at that time cutting his teeth, Dora's mind naturally adverted first to him; and as soon as she gained admittance, her first enquiry was after him.

"Oh, ma'am! he is quite safe, poor little lamb; but to be sure he has had such a 'scape, and for my part I thinks better he had gone poor thing, than them as must go for his sake."

Before this mysterious speech could be developed by the hearer, Stancliffe appeared himself, to "curse the housemaid for her blabbing tongue," and with much less circumlocution, proceed to elucidate the matter himself.

"Yes, truly, you find us in pretty confusion,"

for my part I left the house as soon as I got up, and a fine hunt I find they had after me—did you find old Blackwell at home?"

"I did—all is well *there*, but what is the matter up-stairs? what has been the matter?"

"Why, as far as I can learn, all went on very comfortably yesterday; but this morning, the old woman fancied herself dull, and insisted on going into the nursery, and when there, would needs nurse Everton, who has cried confoundedly, and in my opinion wants whipping."—

"Good heaven! my dear! whip a babe cutting his teeth?"

"Well, what's his teeth to me? however, that's not the story; Mrs. Judy takes it into her head that she could nurse him, and Williams was such a fool as to put him into her arms whilst she went down stairs for some milk; in consequence, the silly old soul, who has not strength to nurse a kitten, pulled faces, and spluttered verses, till the child in terror flounced, struggled, and fell out of her arms, and would inevitably have been killed by going head foremost on the fender, had not Frank adroitly interposed his arm, which saved

the child, and was broken just below the elbow."

Dora sunk on the nearest chair.

"The arm is set, but in *his* case, you know, the accident must inevitably be fatal—Mr. Eton, the surgeon, says *not;* he maintains, that the arm receiving all the injury, and the boy remaining in perfect composure, he will escape; but I am certain he will not, I expect bleeding to come on every minute."—

Stancliffe suddenly stopped, for his wife heard him not; the last word which met her ears was "fatal," when the idea of losing her beloved brother at a moment when he had made himself more dear to her than ever, completely overcame her, and she fainted away before her busy husband had perceived her situation.

Dora was carried to bed, and soon became much worse than Frank, who bore his injury with so much fortitude, that, contrary to all expectation, it failed to produce an effect expected by every one, and *feared* by every one, save Stancliffe, who unhappily gave rather unequivocal tokens of being disappointed in the catastrophe he had so confidently predicted.

Poor Dora lost her expectations of being again a mother, and was reduced to a degree of alarming weakness; but she had the satisfaction of knowing that her husband was much in the house, and that in the confusion and bustle incident to the distressing state of his family, he found a succedaneum for that exciting society he had previously lived amongst. Poor Mrs. Judy's disaster was a perpetual theme on which he rallied her without mercy; and such had been the effect of her accident on the mind of the kind-hearted woman, that it had comparatively reduced her to silence; and, to the sincere grief of Frank, she was perpetually affected even to tears, by the taunts of her nephew, whose talents at every description of scolding, from the scornful sneer, progressively to the loud remonstrance and overwhelming torrent of reproach, were scarcely rivalled, certainly not exceeded, by any female practitioner in Europe.

Dora was soon aware that the contents of her purse had been silently extracted during her illness, and she was sensible that her presence was so much required in her family, that she hastened to descend to the breakfast parlour, where Frank was delighted to receive

the thanks and embraces of a sister, whose gratitude for his preservation ascended on high, and called down blessings on his head; nor could she delay seeing the innocent cause of so much anxiety, poor Mrs. Judy, who screwed up her large featúres into the most hideous contortions, as she approached her, saying,

" Ah! now we three are met again,
" In sorrow, misery, and pain."

" You see, my dear Dolly, I'll tell you how it was; I took the child, and poor simple thing, it can stand well enough, but it can't sit, and I wanted it to sit on this arm, and I told it so—it has never read Locke's Associations, (for a very good reason, because it can't read,) but I will leave them to it in my will, splendidly bound, that it may never do so again—poor dear creature, I hope it will live to forgive me, and I hope you will, my good Frank, forgive me too."

" I have done it, my dear Mrs. Judith, so don't say a word about it, pray don't."

" I believe you, my dear boy, and I'm very glad you are alive to do it—though I do really believe in my heart, 'twould have been better you should have died, for if any body is fit

for an angel, it is you; not that I am like my grand-nephew, I don't therefore wish you to be one, not I, indeed."

"Nor does Stancliffe, my dear ma'am, you quite mistake him—you don't understand him at all."

"Oh! yes, yes, I do, my dear Dolly. I understand all about it; he wants Frank's estate, 'tis as clear as the noon-day—also, he wants my little matter of money, and he says to himself, 'young may go, old must go;' oh! you don't know what penetration I have; but Miss Sally told me that; she says, says she, 'your grand-nephew is a Stancliffe all over, as keen as mustard, as hot as pepper.'"—

Poor Mrs. Judy's comparisons were cut short by the unannounced arrival of a lady, who entering hastily, ran towards Dora, but ere she reached her, started back as if alarmed by her pale looks and her wrapping habiliments.

But in another moment, and the arms of Dora were bound about her neck, calling her "mother, friend, protectress," and weeping in such an agitation of joy, as in her weak state to be almost alarming. When Mrs. Aylmer reflected

on this scene, it became more so to her really maternal heart, than it was in the first moment, for although much might be allowed to her recent illness, and the surprise of the meeting, yet the emotion of poor Dora went beyond any which a happy wife was likely to display, even on the occasion of meeting a much-loved and long-parted parent.

Mr. Stancliffe entered just as Dora was about to retire, and endeavour to compose her spirits; to her great satisfaction, he addressed the stranger in the most suasive and agreeable manners he could assume—those manners which about three years before had made an impression on her heart yet too well remembered; but after thus welcoming *her*, he suddenly addressed his own lady with—

"Dora, you must not give way to crying and weak nerves, you know Mr. Eton says so, and especially not now, for you will have another stranger here before to-morrow night, and one you are little prepared for—your *father*."

"Dear, *dear* papa!" cried Frank, jumping up with the natural expression of joy and rapture. He was reproved by a frown of such withering severity from Stancliffe, that the

heart of Mrs. Aylmer sunk within her at the sight of it, and scarcely could it revive when he added,—

"I am obliged to set out for London by the mail to-night, so you will put me a few necessaries in the portmanteau, my dear."

As Stancliffe spoke, he offered his arm to Dora, whose feeble steps evidently needed support, and when they retired, he hastily explained to her the necessity he was under of seeing Mr. Masterman, and pressing him to advance him some money, as otherwise he could not meet his partner, whose arrival was not less surprising than *mal-a-propos*."

"How do you know my father is coming?"

"Williamson spoke to him in the river this morning; he bade him say nothing of the matter, as he would not leave the vessel till her cargo was landed."

"And is my mother with him?"

"No, he is alone—he said his great object was to see his boy; but I have my doubts of that—you will be very careful in answering his questions—he has the staff in his hand now, and will not fail to show his power; our situations are completely reversed at this time."

Whilst Stancliffe spoke, Dora was silently thanking God, that the poor father had not thus late in life undertaken this long voyage to find his darling son a corpse—something which escaped her on this head made her husband revolve the subject also; but we will not venture to read thoughts which the owner would at one time have shuddered to indulge.

Stancliffe leaving in some measure his fate in the hands of his wife, was kind in his adieus to her, and courteous to the rest of the family, being desirous to render Mrs. Aylmer his friend, and not less so of erasing from the fading memory of his antient relative, the provoking and unfeeling remarks he had showered upon her in the day of trouble. The very tenderness of his parting kiss brought a new sorrow to the heart of Dora; was he not going once more into the very bower of that syren whom she considered the author of all his errors, and her own misfortunes? might not her attractions become stronger than ever by the allurements of dress, the aids of opportunity? must not his very wants render him more interesting to the woman who was conscious of having injured him? and would he not be compelled from that cause to shew himself a

humble, and therefore a captivating, suitor? The distraction produced by such thoughts as these can be judged by those alone who have been similarly situated, and know what that fever of the soul is, which not merely trembles for the fidelity of a partner known to be frail, but also for the moral conduct of an accountable being, for whose eternal welfare they are intensely solicitous. Dora passed a night of such agitation, that in her weak state it was wonderful how she could so far conquer her feelings as to meet her friends with cheerfulness, and prepare to receive the parent she dreaded yet desired to see.

As Mrs. Aylmer had never been fond of Mr. Hemingford, and considered justly that she had been unhandsomely treated in Dora's removal, she determined on withdrawing to the house of another friend during his stay, a resolution Dora could not oppose, although she feared that some reports might reach her affecting the reputation of Stancliffe—thus on every hand she was beset by difficulties. With an independence of spirit which scorned deception, a firmness of integrity in religious principle, that refused every shade of a lie, and a simple ingenuousness of nature which

forbade the power of dissimulation, she yet felt impelled by all her received notions of a wife's allegiance, and all the remains of lingering love to the only man who had ever awakened that feeling in her bosom, to hide his faults, extenuate his foibles, and preserve, or restore him, in the good opinion of her friends.

Mrs. Aylmer's good bye kiss was still on her cheek when Mr. Hemingford drove to the door, and in another moment found himself in the arms of Frank, on whom his eyes seemed to spend not only their powers of sight, but the soul that shone through them; he was become thin, and brown, and almost dried up by trouble and climate; and it was a curious as well as affecting sight, to see his gaunt withered form embracing the beautiful stripling, who appeared too fair a flower for such a blighted root. It was, however, soon evident to Dora, that her father's health and spirits were much better than they had been three years before; and she endeavoured to rejoice that good had come out of evil.

"Well Dora," said the father at last—"you have made a man of my boy, for which, may God bless you; but I cannot say to your husband, he has made a woman of my girl, for

you look thinner and more chitty-faced than when I left you."

" I am only just out of my bed, Sir—we have had a very sickly family, but I shall soon be better."

" Where is Everton?"

" In London"—" he was obliged to go."

" 'Tis all very right, he has hitherto gone much too seldom—when will he be at home?"

" Oh," cried Frank, with a joyous accent, " not this long time; he only went last night."

Poor Dora started, she even trembled, as her father cast his eye upon her—she rose, sat down again, and felt at the very core of her heart, how unworthy it was of her husband to compel her to bear the evils from which he had flown himself, conscious as he must be, even in despite of the vanity and self-love to which he was subject, that she had in no way been accessory to them, and yet that all the personal evil produced had fallen on her alone.

But contempt and indignation, though they would arise for a moment, were never cherished or acted upon by Dora, and when she felt them, it only rendered her the more vigilant in guarding her expressions, and exerting that patient forbearance, which, if it could not

retrieve the past, would yet soften its effects on the future. Though her heart was very full, she compelled herself to speak by enquiring after her mother and her sisters—the answer was laconic, but satisfactory.

"Your mother is not half such a fool as she was; she is willing to grow old, and let the girls play off instead of herself. Kate is very well married, and wonderfully improved, which she honestly imputes to your good example. Louiz is rather cross, but she is active, and makes a very fair housekeeper; by the way, how does Harriet go on?"

"Extremely well, she comes home for good at Midsummer, if you think proper."

"We shall see—perhaps I may take her back, or I may leave her a year for the benefit of your good example;—that it is *good,* I have had more proof in some respects than I wished—every thing that has been done (by a principal at least,) has been done by you; either Everton is swallowed up by his new concern, or he is sunk in idleness—we never see any thing from *him,* no not a line."

"He prefers exertion to writing"

"Yet he has lost much for want of exertion,

he declined taking a journey last spring twelvemonth, which would have put a fortune in his hands—to be sure it was not lost, for the young man who married Kate, took it, and re-established, through some letters you copied, an invaluable connection—ah, child! you have been lucky to us, though we lost your property by a marriage that I doubt has been unlucky to you; but here is a letter from Kate for you, and she has sent you a bag of finery too of some kind. Dora opened the letter and read:

DEAR SISTER,

I never think of you now, but to reproach myself for a thousand instances of bad conduct towards you, which I intreat you to forgive. I grieve to hear many things of Stancliffe, which prove him unworthy of goodness like yours. Mrs. Masterman, in her letters to friends in this place, describes his conduct in so many little particulars indicative of a thorough knowledge of your domestic concerns, that I fear it is but too true; and that now she is no longer near you, things are still worse. My excellent husband has just given me a hundred pound bill for

English purchases; but pray, my dear Dora, use it in any way most conducive to your own comfort, not forgetting that I must insist on buying my little nephew a new frock. Mama looks very well considering—we were all sadly lost for want of company when we first came, but that is now got over, for my own part, I can truly say I regret nothing in England but *you*, whom I used so ill, from pride and envy of that fortune which has hitherto, I fear, done little for your happiness. Pray, my dear sister, write to me fully and confidentially; for you will perceive that your delicacy in speaking so kindly of Everton, has not availed in hiding your situation from us; we all feel for you deeply and sincerely. I am happy to say, that my father is much improved in his temper, and if he could see Frank, would be the happiest of men, for every thing prospers with him, and he is looked up to by every body as the father of the British interest in this place—you were the first person who gave me a true idea of him; but indeed all your words and actions are present to my mind, and when I am a mother, they shall not be lost to my child. Mr. Noble, my excellent husband—(God

knows, a much better than I deserve,) desires his best regards to you, and intreats you to consider him in every respect your friend and brother—my father will introduce you to his relations in ——, if you desire it; and now my beloved, respected sister, I must say farewell, &c. &c.

Dora could not peruse this letter without tears of joy, and feelings of true sisterly regard for the writer, whose sins of unkindness had been long blotted from her memory; but the predominant sensation it excited, was anger towards the woman who had traduced the character of her husband, in a quarter where he had been highly respected, and might be much injured, for errors which she considered to have arisen entirely from her own malignant influence; and she warmly commented to her father on this part of her sister's letter, observing, "that the baseness and cruelty of that woman towards poor Everton, was absolutely shocking."

"Then he did not lie in bed all day when there was any press of business? but did he not compel you, (in fact,) to exertions impro-

per for your situation, and which have entailed weakness on your child? can you deny writing all the foreign letters in your dressing-room, when, in his mad pettishness, he had kicked out the foreign clerk? is it not true that he left you in the very hour of pain and danger? were you not obliged to cut up your own clothes for baby linen, because you had no money till Mrs. Aylmer sent you a present? and was not even that taken from you to help the purchase of a gig, into which you never set your foot? and"—

"Because *she* took possession of it," cried Dora, eagerly; "it was bought to please *her*; —wicked woman, to tell such stories! she knows that she ordered every thing—did every thing—he left me at *her* instigation, slighted me at *her* bidding."

"So—h, so—h," said Mr. Hemingford, "my poor girl, I see how the matter stood—this is the man, who, without pity or consideration, without remembering that the industry of thirty years of my life had been helping his fortune, could take advantage of errors that injured myself alone, to drive me an exile from my native land, and my only son—send

me forth with a constitution injured by toil and sorrow, to lay down my grey hairs in a foreign grave—may God"—

"Father! *father*, do not curse him! he is my husband; him to whom you gave me willingly, nay, thankfully—he *will* repent—he *has* repented—do not curse him! are we not all liable to error? have we not *all* need of mercy and forgiveness?"

Mr. Hemingford sat down and covered his face with his hands—his bosom heaved with convulsive sobs, and the anguish of remembered sorrow combined with newly awakened anger to agitate him to excess. The words of Dora had fallen not less distinctly on his ear than his heart, which they filled with self-reproach, though conscious that she meant it not; at length he replied slowly and in a voice which faultered with extreme emotion:

"*True*, we have all need of forgiveness, child—we ought to ask it of you, who have been unfairly dealt by, ever since you were born:—Dora, Dora, 'tis a sad thing for a man to get into difficulties, it blunts his conscience, confuses his faculties, fills his poor wandering brain with a thousand schemes, and habituates him to think on things he would have

scorned to entertain for a moment in his prosperity."

"Very true, my dear father, heaven preserve us in the day of trouble from the temptations trouble brings."

"Think what it is, Dora, for a man to labour for thirty years, acting liberally, living handsomely, held respectably by all men, being at last brought to the test, convicted of poverty, and condemned to spend the latter years, the natural *resting* years of life, in misery and obscurity?—perhaps eating the bread of charity from those hands he helped to fill—surely such a prospect might shake the stoutest heart, and confuse the clearest head—such a prospect haunted me for years."

"Thank God, it is over, my dear father."

"It is not over, its evils survive in you, Dora—had I trusted you with all I thought and wished, and one half of what I feared, all would have been well—but the woman to whom I was tied had given me no great opinion of your sex, dear heart, and my spirits were cowed as no honest man's should be:—I also felt very *ill* at that time; I did not deem myself equal to do that which I have done—altogether, Stancliffe was my master—I thank

him, he has taught me how to govern—the tables are now turned, and it was time."—

Dora brought her boy to its grandfather, anxious to divert the tenor of his thoughts—he smiled upon it very kindly, but left the house soon, saying, "that he must go to Change, and had indeed a great deal of business to get through, since his whole stay must be as short as possible."

In the present state of anxiety under which she suffered, his daughter could not desire his stay to be protracted; yet this was the first time when she could feel the comfort, the protection, and the confidence, his presence ought to have afforded her.

CHAP. X.

Mr. Hemingford did not return at the hour he had himself appointed for dinner; and as he was wont to be very exact, Dora became extremely uneasy, for she justly dreaded that other circumstances might transpire as to the conduct of her husband, which might tend to irritate his mind; and when at length she sate down with Mrs. Judy and Frank, she was in a state of extreme disorder, which she was anxious to conceal from both.

"Where can your papa be gone?" cried the old lady, "I think all men are alike; 'tis well for me I have had nothing to do with them—there is Stancliffe, now, the most particular creature in the world, he will order half a dozen fid-fads to be got for his dinner, all to be done to a minute, and it is ten to one if he comes when poor Dolly has been fidgetting about them for hours. I'll tell Mr. Hemingford when he comes; I'll say to him, says I,"—

"Dear Mrs. Judith, pray say nothing to my father."

"Say *nothing*—dear! that will be very rude; but if you desire it, I'll do any thing, that is, nothing. All I fear is, not to speak to a stranger will be indecent, and as Milton says, 'The want of decency is want of sense,' but what do you say, my dear Frank?"

"I hear my father's step," said Frank, and in a moment afterwards Mr. Hemingford entered, not indeed to take his place at his daughter's table, but to beckon her out of the room and precede her to her dressing-room in silence, but with a countenance so full of trouble as to prove it the herald of misfortune.

"Dora, child, sit down, I must speak with you."

Dora obeyed, unable to reply, yet trembling less in limb than in heart.

"Is it true that Stancliffe is out almost every evening?—that he comes home very late?"

"He generally does go out for a few hours; in summer he goes to the bowling-green,—*now*, he goes to the billiard-room, I believe."

"Yes! there he goes, and there he stays, after all decent people are gone—in short, he

is become a decided gamester—he has lately lost frequently to the amount of hundreds—we have no money in the bank, all has been drawn out in small sums, not one of which has been applied to the uses demanding it: about three weeks since, he took in a thousand pounds, but it was all drawn out, within two days, by gentlemen, not tradesmen, to whom he had given checks—can you cast any light on this transaction?"

"Oh, no! I thought it was for you that he had got the money. I had no idea of all this, and I hope you have been misinformed—poor Everton is quick in his temper, by which he makes enemies, who judge harshly, and report him unfairly."

"I shall set out for London this very night, and endeavour to save him from further mischief; he is gone to receive money, and it is evident he cannot be trusted to bring it back—the responsibility of a highwayman, or a swindler, is security compared to that of a gamester."

"Take me with you—I will find my husband, and prove to you that he is calumniated—I will"—

Alas! the will was good, but not the power,

as Dora pronounced the last words, she sunk fainting on the shoulder of her father, unable to sustain herself further against the repeated shocks, which, like wave after wave, came over her.

Mr. Hemingford set out, and Dora, aware that his sudden departure after the not less sudden flight of her husband, might lead to conjectures injurious to the credit of both, after the seclusion of one night in her apartment spent in tears and prayers, again entered her usual sitting room, tried to exhilirate the spirits of poor Frank, who was grieved to lose his father so soon, and to endure with cheerful complacency the trying questions of numerous callers upon her father, and the not less trying consolations of Mrs. Judith. Indeed, the half guesses, the occasional truths, the jumble of sense and nonsense, the provoking, wearisome volubility, and the pure good-meaning of this person, formed altogether a regular kind of torment to a wife so situated, which kept the spirits in perpetual anxiety; she either did say something, or you *expected her* to say something, which ought not to be said at *that* moment, or to *that* person.—When the terror of the interview had subsided, and,

after sitting on thorns for an hour, the unwelcome visitant had disappeared, or the prying servant was withdrawn, and the liberated sufferer sought repose, then out poured Mrs. Judith with a flood of nonsense, by way of being agreeable, and supplying the want of other company. At all times a perpetual blister, in the day of trouble she became one of tenfold severity—Dora felt, shuddered, but endured it.

For the following five days and nights, suspence and solicitude were rendered still more difficult to bear from the frequent presence of that dear friend to whose society she had looked so long, as the balm of all her wounds, and with whom in early life she had never known the secret of an hour. But now that her heart was burdened to breaking, she could not speak openly to her; and she even felt her presence a restraint, because she knew that Mrs. Aylmer of necessity read her troubles in her countenance. She felt like one under a spell, she could not, dared not break; yet she was sensible that such a friend as Mrs. Aylmer had a far stronger claim upon her than such a husband as Stancliffe :—but whatever were his faults, she yet pitied and loved him ; and

she would have sought for sympathy in her sorrows, if she could have revealed them without revealing also faults, for which she was unable to offer excuse or apology.

At length a letter arrived from her father, which she hurried with to her most private room before she dared to open; it was evidently written in great trepidation, and contained only two lines.

"I have found him, and, I trust, saved him; but all my fears were well founded—he says he is ill; I shall not leave him a moment,

&c. &c."

The letter was without date, and Dora therefore concluded that her father was about to return with her husband, and she could not help being thankful that they were together, though the last sentence conveyed the idea that Stancliffe had endeavoured to shake him off. The idea of their contention was terrific to her; yet she was compelled to see that her father was the only person who could interpose to save them all from ruin and disgrace, under this new and terrible infliction; but so much did she dread the time of his departure

under circumstances so likely to irritate her husband, that she sincerely wished he might be prevailed upon to remain, and send Stancliffe in his turn to Smyrna, as a change which could hardly fail to be beneficial to his habits, and in consequence to his temper.

No other letter followed, but within a week Mr. Hemingford arrived in a post-chaise accompanied by Stancliffe and his daughter Harriett, who had been for the last four years in a school near town. Dora was informed by her father that her husband was extremely unwell, and must, he believed, be got to bed immediately; but he assured her, in an under tone, " there was no occasion for alarm."

So well was she already acquainted with her husband's passion for his bed, whenever it afforded a refuge from intrusion or vexation, that this information excited no surprise, and she was even glad that he should escape thither, from the shame and trouble which oppressed him, well aware that no word would escape her own lips that could add to his distress, and that her heart was open to his confessions and his complaints, when he chose to utter them, and till then she could attend him in silence and tenderness.

Stancliffe was, in all things which concerned himself, a man of acute feelings; and so sensible was he of the error of his past conduct, that he shrunk from beholding Mr. Hemingford, not only as a son-in-law and a partner, but as a criminal, whose character as a commercial man was irreparably lost. Yet still his pride struggled with his shame; and as he was satisfied that Dora was either ignorant of his late practices, or, knowing, would conceal them, he determined at all hazards to procure money from Mr. Masterman, whom he knew to be rising in the world, and with it to satisfy the claims of a man whom he had long affected to despise, and from whom he had no reason to expect indulgence.

He had found his London partner immersed in business which was now beginning to reward his cares, and offer an abundant harvest in return for the money expended, and the care bestowed; but it had not hitherto produced profits which warranted the expensive stile in which his lady conducted her household. Stancliffe therefore dreaded the further developement of his affairs, prosperous as they appeared; but on explaining the difficulties in which he was placed by the arrival of his father-in-

law, Mr. Masterman readily promised to supply him with money, saying, "that he had a friend immensely rich, who would not suffer him to be distressed, especially at a time when he could offer security so ample;" adding, with a warm grasp of the hand, "but you were my *first* friend, dear Stancliffe; I can never forget what I owe you."

A pang shot through the heart of the conscious traitor at those words, so terrible, that he hastened to leave him, for he was peculiarly alive to the pain of shame, and could with difficulty be brought to appoint an interview the following morning. Masterman was puzzled by the wildness and disorder of his looks; he related the whole affair circumstantially to his wife, who heard it with wounded but better concealed feelings, and eagerly suggested the idea of purchasing Stancliffe's share of their business, which in his present distress he would undoubtedly part with on very advantageous terms for them.

"But consider what we owe him, my dear."

A slight blush suffused the cheek of Mrs. Masterman; but she was subject to blushing, and her husband was not subject to investigation, and he continued to say, "besides, do

you think Mr. Enfield will find the money? for I suppose you are thinking of him."

The lady engaged that he should, and so much was she alarmed with the idea of that eclaircissement her letters to Smyrna might probably occasion between the parties about to meet, that she exerted her influence so effectually over her new *friend*, who was a bachelor advanced in life, and infinitely more her slave than Stancliffe had ever been, that on the following morning a proposal was made so advantageous as to exceed all his hopes; since, although it quashed the golden dreams he had once indulged, and deprived him of the rational expectations of wealth in the day of fruition, yet it returned him nearly all that he had advanced, and what was, in the present state of his feelings, not less welcome, closed for ever a connection with a man whose confidence and kindness inflicted a torture he could not endure.

Had Dora been with him at this moment, perhaps her thankfulness for such a termination of an affair so long oppressive, and her vigilance to turn it into the proper channel of penitence for past error, and resolution for future improvement, might have had its effect

—but, alas! Stancliffe was alone, no eye was upon him, (save that he no longer remembered,) and in looking at the cash and securities he held for a large sum, that demon of avarice, which is the gamester's deity, influenced him to make it larger, and to redeem all his late losses by a stroke. London was the only place for such an experiment, and in London he found himself unchecked by the prying eyes of narrow-minded tradesmen—unfettered by that obtrusive partner whom he might never again so effectually elude.

Most happily for him, that indefatigable partner, despite of years and fatigue, traced him to the place where for hours he had been losing his newly acquired property, with a facility increased by the violence of his temper, which spread a fever through his veins, and utterly incapacitated him from guarding against the ruin he had tempted, whilst it induced him to use language so insulting, as to be only borne by the successful, who found their power of revenge increased by this intemperance. At the moment when Mr. Hemingford forced his way into the apartment where he had spent the night, he found him in all the frenzy of rage, yet nearly exhausted

by the irritation and overwhelming solicitude in which he had been suffering for so many hours, and exposed to the insults of two ferocious looking attendants of a place now nearly deserted by its usual frequenters. His first emotion on the sight of Mr. Hemingford was joy, for he felt after all that he was a friend, and taking his proffered arm, he went out with him with the air of one completely enfeebled and humbled.

Whatever had been the previous anger and alarm experienced by Mr. Hemingford, he could not behold the son of his oldest and best friend, one whom as a child he had loved "and borne on his back a thousand times," thus situated, without being penetrated with the sincerest pity; and the sight of his tall commanding form, the flash of his eye, as he stepped forward to rescue the victim, inspired silence and awe. After driving to his inn, he procured a surgeon, by whom Stancliffe was bled, and consigned to a low regimen, during which time his papers were examined, and the securities not yet turned into cash preserved; and Mr. Hemingford not knowing the real situation of his affairs, therefore concluded

that he had been the mere loser of loose cash taken from home for his expenses.

Even under this persuasion, Mr. Hemingford felt it his duty to impress upon Stancliffe's mind the utter ruin of character and property his conduct must lead to, and press him to promise, and legally bind himself, to abstain for ever from such pursuits; and under the consciousness that he had actually thrown away almost three thousand pounds, the sum he had originally advanced to Mr. Masterman, he became so depressed as to yield unquestioning assent to every proposition. Using the pretext of illness for declining all conversation not immediately necessary, he yet agreed to travel as soon as Mr. Hemingford was ready, and they proceeded homeward accordingly, both parties probably relieved by the presence of Harriett, whose many enquiries, and artless exhibition of pleasure, relieved the tedium of their journey.

From the time Stancliffe had established himself in his own bed, his harrassed mind began to take repose, it was the sanctum where he admitted no intruder,—the solitude, where "a ministering angel" supplied his wants,

endured his rebukes, or soothed his self-upbraidings, assisted his plans of improvement, and revived his hopes for the future.

Mr. Hemingford, too busy to waste time in fruitless messages, and unheeded expostulation, took his old station in the counting-house, busied in preparing himself to return with a large cargo, happy in that he could, from time to time, gaze on the face of his son, assign him some easy task, and remark with delighted admiration, on his improvement. His evening hours were claimed by many old friends, and the company of Harriet was so frequently sought by the companions of her childhood, that Dora was enabled to give every moment of her time to her husband, her child, and Mrs. Judy; but as each required or desired it all, she had constant uneasiness in the distribution.

At length all things were ready for Mr. Hemingford's departure, and Dora hoped that her invalid husband would exert himself to bid him farewell; but this he positively refused, although he sent a kind message, and a proposal of exchanging situations with him the following year, provided his health permitted it.

"That is out of the question," replied the father, "for a constitution was never yet found, which could resist the system of slow but certain suicide, he has adopted:—but when I am gone, he will be better, I trust; and since we have destroyed our worst enemy, all things may come round. I have heard much, and seen a good deal too, of what time and patience may do, so I hope you wont despair, Dora;—only remember this, that when I am gone, you *must* see after things—my sleeping partner must have an active representative; at the end of my term you will have a double release, so keep up your spirits."

Mr. Hemingford uttered this farewel exhortation in the hearing of Mrs. Aylmer; and when he was set out, accompanied by his youngest children, who hung round him to the last moment, Dora, wiping her eyes, looked wistfully in the face of her best friend, and said,

"I am willing to do all in my power, but surely Stancliffe will soon be better!—it is hope alone which can enable me to increase my duties."

"But, my dear child, you must not live on hope, for it will only lead to disappointment·

remember constantly, that though duty and prudence prescribe the best means of securing earthly happiness, and that forsaking their dictates never fails to produce misery—yet this is not the Christian's rest; it is the scene of his trial, not of his reward—in early life, hope is indeed the natural stimulus for all exertion; and patient expectation of good will enable us to endure much evil—but those who "continue in well-doing and faint not," because they receive all trials as preparatives for another state of being—who hold them as purifiers, and receive them not as from man, but God, are less liable to the agony of disappointment, and the weariness, the soul sickness, which arises from hope deferred.

"Ah!" exclaimed Dora, "but how can my heart ascend to heaven and expatiate on its future happiness so long as it takes not my husband in its flight? I am compelled to live in hope, that I may enjoy the blessings of faith, for are we not *one?* must we not be *one* for ever?"

"That must depend on himself, not you—the ties of marriage are sacred and strong, but not indissoluble, even in this world; still less can they be carried into another—to

deem them eternal, to look to their re-union, is indeed the greatest, sweetest, contemplation of the bereaved heart; but if it is denied, we must not murmur, since we know it can be abundantly supplied to us."

"True; but surely we should struggle hard and long, ere we resigned the hope to snatch from perdition, to win to virtue, one so closely bound: seventy times seven should the erring brother be forgiven and 'drawn with the cords of love.'—To man belongs the glory and the reward, of turning *many* to righteousness; but since woman can only move in the narrow circle of her own family, she ought to make up in perseverance what she wants in extent; and since the use of remonstrance and exhortation are denied, she should preach by example, and by forbearance, submission, and godly sincerity, so impress her husband's mind, that he may be led to seek the same fold and the same shepherd with herself."

"It is certainly right that every woman should so endeavour, and so act, Dora; for I consider it a positive fact, that woman will never attain the blessings you speak of by any other means; but since man ought to be her guide, as he is her head, in general there is

little reason to expect that he who is neither led by love, nor bound by duty, will be moved much by example he never studies, and with which he has no sympathy—but it is certain we should 'pray and faint not;' therefore go on, my love, and may your reward be abundant."

CHAP. XI.

After Mr. Hemingford had set out, and that pressure of business had subsided, which he had caused, Mrs. Aylmer hoped to enjoy a little of the society of Dora, which she had yet caught only by starts; for as after the strictest enquiry from his medical attendant, she found that Mr. Stancliffe had no complaint to which a name could be given, she concluded that he would leave his chamber now the person had departed whose presence from personal dislike or other cause had annoyed him. This circumstance not taking place, and Dora being so closely confined, from her attendance on him, as to render all easy intercourse impracticable, she took her departure for Crickhowel, but had not decided on remaining there. Although unenlightened on the particular state of her beloved young friend's actual situation, she unavoidably saw so much of suffering in it, as to render her uncertain whether it was best to fix her residence near her or not.

At the name of Crickhowel the eyes of Dora filled with tears, she eagerly wished " she could see it once more ;" and she began to speak of her youthful companions, her happy occupations—suddenly stopping, she exclaimed, " I must not *dare* to think on these subjects, they would lead me out of the path in which I am called to walk ; but yet I would not be quite forgotten by those who used to love me—the Sydenhams'."

" They will continue to love you, Dora,—some of them"—Mrs. Aylmer had nearly dropt the words " too well ;" but she did not, and changing the conversation, she accepted from Dora, (poor as she was,) various little presents for her old neighbours and Sunday scholars, and forced upon her with a parental command, a present in money which she but too evidently had occasion for, and would have accepted with more ease, if she had not been conscious of wanting it, and felt that in that want, was a reproach to him on whom she could not endure that blame should rest.

Bitter as was the pang of parting, yet Dora believed that Stancliffe would exert himself when a person was gone, whom he always appeared to consider in the light of a parent or

future benefactor, whom he feared to offend, lest his interest should suffer, but was too proud to conciliate from a false conception of her character, which was full of kindness and indulgence. In this respect, however, Dora found herself mistaken; Stancliffe turned a deaf ear alike to her suggestions and those of his medical attendant, who pressed him to remove to country lodgings, use gentle exercise, and step by degrees back again into the world which he had now quitted for the space of three long months—the victim in fact of shame, sullenless, and self-reproach, aided by indolence and that tyranny of temper, which found great powers of self-indulgence in a situation which forbade the approach of all who were not in a state of servitude or dependance.

It will be easily supposed that in this situation Stancliffe soon completely lost his appetite, that he became pale, emaciated, and nervous; and that excluding himself from the usual topics of conversation and subjects of interest, he was naturally thrown upon recollections of the most painful kind, which in his present disposition, failed to awaken the sorrows of a penitent heart, but renewed perpe-

tually the irritation of temper which in his state of self-subjugated health, was seriously injurious to him. When his wife had parted from her father and her friend, he then told her fully all his losses by play, the " ill usage and the ill luck" which had attended him, and in " fighting all his battles o'er again," frequently worked himself into a state of agitation so terrible, as to render him an object of the sincerest pity to a heart so tender as that of Dora. At such moments, she would weep over, embrace him, re-assure him by every motive which could suggest consolation, or awaken hope ; and there were times when he appeared moved by her tenderness, and aware that notwithstanding what he termed his misfortunes, no man could have escaped with lighter punishment for heavy sins. He well knew that in a great commercial town like that which he inhabited, the conduct of any individual occupies but short attention, that the house of which he was the first partner was in high credit, and flourishing circumstances, and that as he had had no open breach with his partner on his late visit, but on the contrary they had travelled together in friendly and family compact, there appeared always a

power of stepping out of his nominal sick room without attracting attention, or exciting observation. But in vain did his own mind suggest, or Dora in the gentlest manner display these advantages; he allowed them, but from caprice, indolence, irresolution, which were now indeed aided by bodily weakness, he continued in his chamber.

One point at length Dora gained, which was that of admitting now and then a friend to sit with him; and on Harriett's return from a visit in the neighbourhood, he desired to see her. This interview appeared to be attended with happy consequences; for upon her representation of the beauties of the country, he declared that he would have a lodging procured, and remove thither immediately—he proposed dressing, and thought he could venture into the drawing-room.

With joy and tenderness, even sincere gratitude to him for this exertion, Dora made every arrangement that could tend to his accommodation; she took care to place poor Mrs. Judith and her dog out of hearing, and so to contrive every circumstance, and combine every motive for exertion, that he might be stimulated to use it. In another day he

was persuaded to take an airing; and as his pale and interesting countenance naturally attracted attention, there was reason to believe his vanity would be gratified by the pity he appeared to excite; nor was that faculty dormant; but on his return he did not appear to wish for any company beyond his own family, and Dora's heart bounded with the hope that the happiness she had so long desired would really be her's—she should behold Stancliffe a happy and attached husband, fulfilling his duties in society, but holding his home as the scene of his dearest pleasures; his wife as the friend of his bosom.

Every airing, and indeed every hour, as might be expected, increased the strength and renewed the appetite of the invalid, who not only abandoned the idea of removal, but now expressed as great a desire for company as he had lately shewn aversion; and although Dora had herself been so reduced by her long confinement with him as to be little equal to fatigue; yet her desire to see him resume his place in society, and to seize the present moment for obliterating all the past, induced her to exert herself to the utmost in preparing her household for a mode of exertion to which

it had been long unaccustomed. Frank was her constant auxiliary; he daily read, and frequently answered, the letters of business, dispatched all her cards of invitation, listened to Mrs. Judith with the patience of Job, and played with his little nephew by the hour. He was still a kind of alien from the apartment occupied by Stancliffe, who had certainly not quite forgiven him for falsifying his own prophesy, and presuming to live. Frank felt this, but never commented upon it; yet he one day observed, "that his brother gave all the love to Harriett which he ought to have divided between them."

"Don't be jealous, my dear boy," said Dora; yet as she said so, a pang resembling jealousy shot through her own heart, which compelled her to see that the observations which followed were just, as Frank answered.

"I am not angry at *Harriett*, she is very good-tempered, and has done us all good, for which I sincerely thank her; but I cannot help seeing that Mr. Stancliffe, who never would allow any other person to influence him the least in the world, obeys her as it were in every thing—it was at *her* suggestion he left his bed, for *her* sake he went out an airing,

because *she* thought it dull, he invited company, and he yields to every thing *she* says, except that of going into country lodgings; and I really think that is because he knows that he then would be parted from her, for she dislikes the country."

The innocent but true *exposè* of her husband's conduct and feelings, wrung the heart of Dora, and again crushed her new-born hopes of happier days; but she struggled to subdue her feelings, and trusted that the volatility of her husband, if not a better motive, would (now he began to enter into company) give a new turn to his mind. She revolved numerous plans by which to wean him from an inclination she considered as childish, rather than criminal, in its present state, but which could not be checked too soon; and she felt an especial care to prevent Harriett herself from perceiving it—whilst thus busied with various cares, the sudden and increasing illness which seized her little boy, soon absorbed all her thoughts in him.

It appeared that the child was seized with the measles under very alarming symptoms; and as Harriett had never had the complaint, as soon as this was announced, she declared

an intention of setting out for Preston immediately, being already engaged to pay a visit there, a measure Dora considered very prudent; but when Stancliffe professed a determination to accompany her thither, she could not forbear to insist "that he could not possibly be equal to any such exertion."

"Really," said Harriett, "I think it would do him good; at the same time, Dora, I know he ought not to leave you—I don't know what to say!"—

Neither did the anxious wife and sister; but sufficient had passed to determine Stancliffe to abide by any object of his own wishes, and in a very short time he was on the road with Harriett; and Dora, with her suffering child on her lap, and the eternal questions and condolencies of Mrs. Judith in her ear, was compelled to forget ideal evils, in the actual ones by which she was surrounded.

To her surprise, and undoubtedly her gratification, her husband returned as soon as it was possible for a person in high health to have performed the journey; and although she could not but feel hurt at the cold manner in which he enquired after the child, and his total disregard of her, yet she did not wonder

that he should immediately go to bed, nor that, with his former predilection for it, he should remain there the three following days in a state of complete relapse as to his former humour and indisposition.

At this time the little object of poor Dora's unceasing care expired in her arms, and even the apathy of the father was aroused. Stancliffe left his bed, and insisted with authority, if not with kindness, that "since all was over, his wife should take care of herself." He sent for a nurse, whom he ordered never to leave her, "for he was certain she was ill;" and he spoke as if he considered her illness in the light of an injury to himself; he was evidently in a state of considerable mental inquietude and agitation, but it neither could be occasioned by sorrow for his child, nor sympathy with its mother; for he was well aware that a few kind words would have been more consolatory to her than any medical aid, yet he withheld them, and indeed never approached her chamber. He buried the child as soon as was consistent with decency, and then set out for those country lodgings he had previously refused, leaving Dora to follow him when she should be able.

The coldness and unfeeling stoicism assumed by Stancliffe at this time of severe suffering, gave a shock to the spirits and the affections of Dora, such as she had never experienced before, and rendered an indisposition which was merely the effect of grief and fatigue, and which would soon have yielded to the usual remedies, serious and lasting. Stancliffe was himself a very unhappy man, and his present unkindness was the result of pride, mortification, and fear :—he had, in fact, insulted Harriett, quarrelled with her, and in his own apprehension, made a family breach which never would be healed; and expecting that Dora would be informed of this by every post, he shrunk from seeing her. As it is always the nature of guilt to be cowardly, his conscience construed every thing into offence and reproach, and he fled from his own house, as he had previously done from general society, lest he should be annoyed by reproach he was conscious of meriting, though by no means in the habit of experiencing.

Loathing his own society, which was now unrelieved, as formerly, by a wife always endeavouring to amuse him, and reproved by every memorial of her regard for him for

deserting her until she had, by using the reproach he dreaded, given him a pretext for such desertion, Stancliffe determined to try some means of diverting his chagrin by change of scene. The death of his child had been a trouble to him less for the love he felt for it, than the idea of losing one hold upon its mother's property; he had unfortunately from its very birth, considered it somewhat in the light of a rival; yet he had also the idea (of course) that it ensured him succession, and since it was gone, he was extremely anxious for Dora's life, (at least, until she became of age,) also for poor Frank's death during his minority, and he determined to pay an incognito visit to that property which he hoped to call his own hereafter, through this two-fold medium.

As Stancliffe had no servant with him, and went out a great deal on horseback, staying away a day or two at a time, it was easy to carry his design into execution. He avoided the side on which the estates of his trustee laid; but, desirous of making many enquiries concerning him, he stopped at a little farm-house, where he bargained for oats for his

horse, and made sufficient acquaintance to answer his purpose.

The head of this family was a widow with several children; they had all heard that the future landlord of Mrs. Downe's estate was a handsome, sickly young gentleman; and as Stancliffe during his long confinement had contracted a very delicate appearance, (which was now aided by his mourning dress,) and it was evident the strange gentleman knew a great deal about the place, though "he seemed to be mighty secret," it was not surprising that they concluded this very person was to be their future landlord. Under this persuasion, together probably with that interest the pleasing person and manners of Stancliffe naturally inspired, every way of performing the agreeable their humble means allowed, were put in requisition—the parlour was made tidy, tea and cakes were provided, and most unhappily, the prettiest daughter of the three waited upon his honour.

This young woman's modest and almost fearful demeanour, which blended with profound respect that pity and tenderness the strange gentleman's supposed illness excited,

was extremely flattering to the vanity of Stancliffe, and the more gratifying at a time when he was still smarting from the contemptuous reproaches of one he now despised as a mere chit, and apprehending the contempt of another, whom, however he might fly from or neglect, he yet held in high esteem. He was also pleased with her person, and the high glow of health in her countenance; and perceiving that in the affability of his manners, and the contemplation of his person, the fair rustic received as much pleasure as she gave, he determined to renew his visit, precisely for the reasons that (as a wise man) should have deterred him.

Stancliffe went again; but he then saw Alice clandestinely, and without disclosing his real name, professed for her a passion which was met on her part with fondness but modesty—she was ignorant, but not vicious; and although ambition might be awakened in her mind, love was the prevailing sentiment, and it was not difficult to prevail upon her to remove to a situation where he could see her more frequently. When Stancliffe had arranged this plan, he became excessively embarrassed respecting its execution; and in

order to hide the guilty secret which no one suspected, returned suddenly to his own house, and applied himself with new and extraordinary diligence to the proper management of his business.

Dora was now beginning to recover from her illness, and thankful to see the turn he now was taking, though her heart was still that of a bereaved mother mourning for her only child, she exerted herself to the utmost to prove her resignation to the divine will, and her desire to make her home cheerful and pleasant to her husband. So happy were her exertions in this respect, that he ventured to enquire about Harriett, to which Dora replied by saying, "that she corresponded with Frank, not her; but she understood that the death of the little boy had given her such a shock, that she declined returning to their house for the winter."

From this time Stancliffe found a new sense of dislike steal over his mind towards that most amiable boy; and as he was now much in the counting-house, he made such continual opportunities of finding fault with him in the most rude and unjustifiable manner, that his life was rendered miserable. Dora perceiving him look unwell, advised him to remain

in the house; but on his doing so, the temper of Stancliffe broke out with uncontroulable fury. He was on the point of striking him a heavy blow, when Dora, in extreme terror, flung herself in betwixt them, and received it on her arm.

Stancliffe pushed her away violently, but suddenly recovering himself, said, "what right had you to interfere? but I suppose, madam, it was done to make me the despicable wretch who could strike a woman."

"No, my love," said Dora, recovering from her fright, "it was to save you from hurting one much weaker than any woman—although poor Frank did not bleed when he got a broken arm to save our little Everton, yet you know Dr. —— said that a slight blow in the back or stomach would"—

"Oh! yes, 'tis all very fine—I tell you he is as well as I am; and I abhor idleness, as I hate the devil, and do not choose to support him for nothing to be a spy on my actions—out of my sight, Sir."

"I cannot leave my sister, Sir," said Frank, with modest firmness, "whilst you are so angry."

Stancliffe was disconcerted by the calm

intrepidity with which so weak a creature met his rage; and he fancied that his courage proceeded from some knowledge of which in fact Frank was utterly ignorant—he felt defeated, and called upon for increased caution; but his hatred to the poor boy was rendered the more inveterate, and as he was too proud and passionate for caution, every person about him noticed it, and commented upon it.

Often would Dora revolve in her own mind the propriety of removing her brother from a house where he was so unworthily treated, and consider what plausible pretext she could offer for such a measure; but when she mentioned it to Frank, he cut short all her schemes by an assurance "that he had considered the matter a thousand times, and had resolved rather to die with her, than to leave her, unless he could be assured that Stancliffe's dislike to him was such as to render his removal valuable to her, in which case he would go to his guardian immediately."

Dora seized a moment of calmness to mention this to Stancliffe, and saw with an astonishment which moved her pity, that he was agitated by the bare mention of Mr. Blackwell's name—he begged her, in the utmost

trepidation, to say no more on the subject; adding, " Frank knows my temper, and so do you, and I should think you were both too good Christians to bear malice; pray let me hear no more about parting. I would not have him go to —— for the world—no, not for the *world*."

Stancliffe spoke with earnestness, for he spoke the truth; and Dora so reported what she considered a protestation of penitence for his late unkindness, that Frank agreed with her for the hundredth time, " that dear Everton's disposition had a great deal of what was good in it," and that "he would come about some time, and repay them for all their anxieties."

CHAP. XII.

Every day, every hour, was now observed to increase the irritability of Stancliffe's temper, and the bustle of his life, although there was no particular business to be done; and such appeared his extreme anxiety, (without any apparent cause,) that Dora began to fear that he had again got some pecuniary embarrassment upon his mind of which she was ignorant, and the thoughts of which affected his temper and spirits in this extraordinary manner. Little did she think that his counting-house writing consisted of love letters, which it was difficult for him so to write as that they should be decyphered by her to whom they were addressed; and still less could she suppose that the ill-humour and evident desire to quarrel with her, which actuated her husband, arose from the perpetual struggle of his conscience with his inclinations, his remains of good principle with a selfish passion, which demanded a double sacrifice.

Poor Mrs. Judith, who was the only happy person his disturbed temper did not involve, (in consequence of his banishment of her every hour save that of dinner,) very frequently roused his suspicion by her various quotations, and her affectation of being knowing and mysterious. One day he observed, in rather an indeterminate manner, "that he believed he should be obliged to go to Dublin, and he wished his linen to be ready," on which Dora answered, "she would be very glad to accompany him there if he pleased."

"I go on business and want no company."

Dora replied only by saying, "his portmanteau could be packed in half an hour."

"So," cried Mrs. Judith, "then she musn't go, poor dear; but as Shakspeare says,

'Be of your husband's mind, if right or wrong,
'And eat your pudding, slave, and hold your tongue.'"

Stancliffe frowned.

"You think that is not Shakspeare," continued Mrs. Judith; "well, then, this is:

'Heaven first taught letters for some madman's aid,
'Some *raving* lover, and some *rural* maid.'"

Well as Stancliffe was acquainted with the perpetual blunders made by the poor old lady, and certain as he must be that no person in

his senses would ever entrust her with even the shadow of a secret; yet the guilty recollection of having written a letter of the utmost importance two hours before, and in doing which he had been twice interrupted, filled his breast with rage and alarm. In the confusion, his sudden passion awakened, he ran into the counting-house, thinking he had left it there—his face at the moment assuming a deadly paleness, and his whole frame exhibiting trepidation.

Dora was at the moment carefully dividing a chicken's wing for her aged guest, and did not observe her husband's countenance; but Frank was struck by the idea that he was seized with sudden illness, and he immediately followed him.

Dora gazed round with surprise as the servant closed the door, and looked to him for explanation.

"My master went out, and Mr. Francis followed him; I think they went in the direction to the counting-house, but there is nobody in there at present, ma'am."

Dora apologized to Mrs. Judith, and instantly followed them, dreading she knew not what—the loud and angry voice of her hus-

band quickened her trembling steps, as she passed through the intervening warehouses.

At the moment Dora reached the counting-house, she perceived Stancliffe striking Frank with a ruler that had been lying on the desk—the youth was extremely slender, but very tall, and Stancliffe having seized him by the right arm, beat him violently on the back, in spite of his utmost struggles to escape.

The first sensation which assailed Dora on sight of this horrible spectacle, was a pang so terrible, that she felt as if struck with death, and instinctively laid her hand on her heart as if to keep it within her breast—she essayed to scream, but had no power; yet in another moment anger usurped the place of terror, and she felt as if endued with a giant's strength. Springing forward, she seized the uplifted arm of Stancliffe, and by a violent and sudden movement, pushed him aside, and clasped her arms round Frank, crying in a thick convulsive voice,

"Madman!—how dare you strike him?"

Before it was possible to reply, or even to repeat the blow, a deluge of blood poured from the mouth and nostrils of poor Frank, who sunk fainting on the floor, and Dora,

unable to sustain him, sunk with him ; but her senses quickened by new terrors, she recovered the power of screaming aloud for help, though fearful that none was nigh.

The sight of blood calmed in a moment the fury of Stancliffe ; he plucked his handkerchief from his pocket by a natural movement to offer aid, and out flew the letter half directed, which he had accused Frank of taking, and which he now recollected that with a hurried hand and beating heart, he had stuffed into his pocket on being spoken to by an old servant of the house, before whose eye his guilty intentions made him shrink. The victim of his rage perceived it, and pointed towards it, as he lay speechless and apparently pouring out his life.

Dora comprehended from the action, whence the terrible scene had arisen ; but her eye fell not on the direction of the letter—steps were heard, and she said, whilst a new agony pierced her heart,

" Fly, Stancliffe, fly—you are a murderer."

" No—no"—faintly murmured Francis, putting up his hand as if to beckon him nearer.

The footman entered, having in fact been listening, in the present case a happy circum-

stance—he ran back to the house, sent in all the maids, and flew himself for the medical gentleman who usually attended the family.

They found their mistress supporting her brother in the best position her terror and weakness permitted, and their master standing bolt upright, a letter and handkerchief in his hand, with the air of a man horror struck. At their approach, he hastily put the letter in his most secure pocket, and began to wipe off the blood which had touched his own person.

" He faints—he is dying, mistress cannot support him; pray, sir, come to this side," said one.

Stancliffe half moved in obedience; but a stern, and to him appalling expression, in the hitherto meek countenance of his wife, forbade his approach; but he stood rivetted to the place, in a kind of desperate, yet agonizing resolution.

A deep swoon, which looked like death, but by checking the effusion of blood gave in fact his only chance for life, now rapt the senses of poor Frank. Stancliffe believed him dead; but Dora, who had seen him thus before, (although from a far inferior cause,) was

a little relieved by the hope she founded upon it, and persisted in holding him in the same posture till the arrival of medical assistance. Her resolution saved his life; and on their arrival, by proper means his senses were restored, his eyes opened, and the tongue which appeared silenced for ever, asked faintly for Dora.

"She is here," said Dr. C.—"your head is on her shoulder."

"And Everton—*poor* Everton."—

"He is here too, my dear Mr. Francis, but you must not speak."

Frank put out his hand—Everton, by a motion from the surgeon, came near and took hold of it—he pressed it fondly, covered it with kisses and with tears; and such was the extreme agitation which affected him, that the surgeon forcibly drew him out of the room, and there was a positive mandate issued that he must not approach the patient again, as being evidently unable to controul his feelings.

Francis, accustomed to submission, resigned to death, and happy in the belief, that his full and free forgiveness of Stancliffe was understood by him, and would eventually have

a happy effect upon him, gave himself every chance of recovery his deplorable ease admitted. As even the shortest removal might be fatal, he remained many days on the same spot with pillows placed under him, and his sister seated in silence near him, with her eyes continually bent upon him; yet fearful of looking too tenderly, lest she should disturb that placid fortitude which was his only medium for recovery, and perhaps his best preparative for removal. Dora well knew that her young patient could learn from her no new lesson; she was aware that his humble spirit communed with God, and was at rest, and earnestly did her own heart ascend to heaven and seek for peace also; but, alas! she could not find it now—her outward calmness was the result of effort rising out of necessity and affliction, for new and terrible emotions still continued to agitate her—she still beheld her husband as the murderer of her brother—that brother, whose love to herself, her child, and even her husband—whose misfortunes, gentleness, and goodness, rendered him an object of such singular interest and affection.

When she reflected on the bitter sorrow

Stancliffe had evinced, she wept and forgave him; but she could not but feel aware that there was no reliance on a man who suffered himself to be governed by his passions—that he had destroyed all the esteem with which she had so long compelled herself to regard him, and that although he must ever retain a certain hold upon her affections, as well as a claim upon her duty, it was utterly impossible for her either to regain past feelings, or establish new ones, of that nature which alone render married life happy, and without which a wife is a creature whose affections, hopes, and virtues, are blighted in the bud, and who sustains existence as a withered plant that decays by slow degrees, unblessing and unblest.

Whilst Dora pursued these sad thoughts by the side of her sick brother, it will be concluded that those of Stancliffe were also of an afflictive nature—he had indeed been wrung to the heart with the touching forgiveness of the poor boy, and called down the bitterest curses on his own head if ever he should again indulge a thought against him; and with such resolutions he soothed his conscience. The enquiries of the medical gentleman as to the

cause of Frank's distressing situation, the surmises of his servants, and the perpetual guesses of Mrs. Judith, harrassed him exceedingly; and as he never stooped to inconvenience, although he had so recently bent under the severer inflictions of remorse, or considered for a moment what was due to the dreadful situation of his wife, in the course of the following day he declared an intention of prosecuting his intended journey to Ireland.

This information was whispered to Dora just at the time when the physician was urging her to send for Harriett, and Frank by a look of intreaty was seconding the request. Conscious that Stancliffe had said truly "that he could do no good to Frank," and fearful that in this season of his affliction he might be tempted to throw himself too much upon the pity of Harriett for his own good name in her family, and perhaps in her kindness find consolation beyond what she could desire, she considered his removal as equally happy for them all, and stealing out on tiptoe, she repaired to the house to inform him so.

Stancliffe could not see his wife without extreme confusion—he covered his face with his hands, and traversed the breakfast-room, where

she found him, with hasty steps, and the air of one who was agitated even to illness. The heart of Dora was penetrated with the sincerest pity, and she was even astonished at the tenderness she was still sensible of towards him, as with haste she poured into his ear every thing she could conceive most likely to comfort and re-assure him, which consisted, (in her opinion,) in a detail of every favourable symptom the invalid discovered.

Whilst she yet spoke, she was sent for by the person who was with him, and who was alarmed—Dora flew out in answer to the summons, yet she stopped a moment, saying, "good bye, Everton," and held out her hand—she could not part in coldness; and hurried and distressed as she was at the moment, she thought he would follow her to say farewell. Stancliffe took his hand from his forehead, and waived it as he looked at her, but he did no more; and before she reached the door which led to her destination, she heard him order a coach by which to depart.

The circumstance which had excited alarm for poor Frank passed over, and when he found Mr. Stancliffe was gone, it was evident that he was easier, since he knew that Dora could

now remain with him unblamed, or uncalled by other duties; and when her spirits were a little recovered from the shock they received from such a parting, she wrote a few lines to Harriett, which she sent by her own servant, as an escort to her, with whom she could return by an early coach.

The affectionate sister, alarmed and grieved, lost all her late personal fears, and hastened to the house of mourning; she travelled in the night, and arrived just as the medical men were about to pay their morning visit.

"'Tis well you are arrived," said Dr. C— "Miss Hemingford, since your sister has left home so suddenly."

"My sister is at home, sir; it is Mr. Stancliffe who is gone to Ireland."

"They are both gone, I assure you, they sailed together some hours ago, I saw them take boat."

At this moment Dora appeared, for she had been so fearful that Harriett should, in the impetuosity of her anxiety, enter the room suddenly where Frank still lay, that she had been watching for her some time.

"Here comes my sister," said Harriett, exultingly.

The doctor explained—he perceived "that Mrs. Stancliffe had only seen Mr. S. on board, and returned with the boat;" all he knew was, "that he saw Mr. Stancliffe and a lady, who was wrapped in a large cloak and a veil, and the master of the vessel, who was following them, said, as he passed, that such and such packages belonged to the gentleman and his wife, pointing to the persons in question—thence had arisen his mistake."

Dora's heart died within her as she heard this; but she struggled hard with her sensations, and kissing Harriett, begged her to sit down whilst she went with the gentleman to visit Frank—on her return, she found, to her great surprise, that she had left the house and had taken the servant with her.

Dora concluded that some mistake in the luggage had occasioned this sudden movement; and as she had taken no breakfast, expected her return every minute; but nearly two hours had elapsed when a coach stopped, out of which Harriett came, looking more dead than alive. At the sight of her sister, she burst into a passion of hysterical weeping, and clinging around her, called her "my poor Dora, my dear deserted sister."

"For heaven's sake compose yourself, Harriett, you are overpowered with grief and fasting, my dear," said Dora.

"Oh! no, no! I was sure from what Dr. C. said, there was something particular in Stancliffe's being with a lady so soon in the morning—and *I* knew what a bad man he was, but never, *never* would I have given you an uneasy hour by telling of his faults, if he had not thus wickedly, openly, insulted you, deserted you—at such a time too!—Oh! it is infamous."

Dora sunk on a chair—she had thought her cup of suffering was full before, but she felt of how much more it had been capable—twice she opened her lips to speak, but no sound issued thence.

"I know what you would say," cried Harriett, "for you always excuse for him; but William has enquired at the right places, and 'tis all plain enough—yesterday morning two passengers, as Mr. and Mrs. Hemingford, were entered on the Crocodile; and this morning, Mr. and Mrs. Stancliffe took possession of them—the mistake in the name in the first place, is not surprising—the second explains

itself, he has taken some woman with him as his wife."

The extraordinary confusion of Stancliffe, the circumstance of his great rage at Frank being excited by a letter found in his own pocket, never referred to as one of business, tended to confirm this most disgraceful and distressing fact; yet slowly would Dora admit its possibility even to her own mind, for to her it appeared utterly improbable that any human being could rush from the commission of one crime for which he had evidently suffered so much, to another from which he was likely to suffer not less. Reflection on her husband's temper, his late habits of estrangement, and the possibility that the connection had been long, and the influence powerful, which finally produced this denouement, obliged her at length to conclude that it was but too true.

Dora crept with slow and trembling steps to her chamber, oppressed to the inmost soul, bowed down to the dust by the guilt of another—the reality of this sensation, the shame, the confusion of face, the intense sorrow of heart it inflicts, have been felt too often to

need insisting upon. The tears, the groans—the unuttered prayers of her soul, told of grief which, as it was unseen, is also indescribable—Would that there were fewer hearts capable of conceiving it.

But Dora, whilst she felt as a woman and a wife, bent also to that heavenly Father who saw it good to afflict her; and her 'tribulation yet worked patience,' the hour of evening saw her again at the bed-side of poor Frank, from which she dismissed Harriett to that repose she needed, with an affectionate assurance "that her spirits were better," and an injunction to secresy on those circumstances "which amounted even yet only to surmise."

Every day saw Frank gain some little accession of strength, but even when permitted to be removed to his own bed, he was still forbidden to speak; nor was one word allowed to be uttered in his presence which could be supposed capable of exciting pain or pleasure. Harriett, with warm affection and the purest good-will, was yet found incapable of retaining her thoughts within the discipline required. Dora therefore appointed her to manage her house and take care of Mrs. Judith, as a charge more within her powers; and she

not only undertook these, but instituted herself a correspondent to Mrs. Aylmer, whom she judged a friend, the situation of her ill-used sister at this critical period imperatively called for.

Harriett possessed in common with many young ladies of the present period, the power of writing a good letter, and she had reason to congratulate herself upon her eloquence, for in a very few days after she had forwarded her clandestine epistle, Mrs. Aylmer, with all the anxiety of a mother depicted in her countenance, appeared in person to prove she had not been applied to as a friend in vain.

Dora's first emotion on hearing of this arrival, was shame and sorrow, and a dread of meeting that beloved countenance in which she had never yet read reproach. The moment she beheld her, dissipated for a time this embarrassment, and as she was pressed to her maternal bosom, she felt that there is a tie of the heart which as it grew with our growth, may last till our decay, and console us in some measure for those which, though sweeter and stronger, are too often rent asunder by vice, or worn out by indifference.

Mrs. Aylmer had always been so much

beloved by Frank, that she was immediately admitted to his room with less than the usual interdict; and as he was by degrees permitted to speak, she enquired very naturally "what had been the cause of an attack so unexpected, and so contrary to the hopes of his friends." Frank shook his head, but never replied; and when he perceived she thought he had been blameable in using improper exertion, he looked satisfied and relieved—the feelings of the wife at these moments were agitating to the last degree; the more of Stancliffe's faults were inevitably exposed, the more she sought to veil the rest, yet how difficult was it to forbear thanking Frank, and in the very expression of her grateful overflowing heart, endangering the existence which hung on so fine a fibre.

More than a month had passed, and not a single line had been received from Stancliffe, proof decisive of his guilt, and also of his shame, since policy alone would have dictated enquiries after one with whom he was so nearly connected. The silence was broken by a letter received by Mr. Hazlewood, his principal clerk, which was as follows.

Sir,

I am requested to inform you, that in consequence of a meeting which took place between Mr. Stancliffe and lieutenant Grainger, the former lies extremely ill, he having received a wound in the shoulder, by which he has lost much blood, and is exceedingly reduced. He wishes his lady to be informed of this circumstance in the manner you judge best, and that she be earnestly requested to come to his assistance, bringing with her a sum of money adequate to the case.

I am, &c. &c.

J. Eustace,

Surgeon, &c. &c.

The contents of this letter were first made known to Harriett, who, although shocked at the circumstance, had no idea that her sister could feel sympathy in the degree a wife, however treated, was sure to experience in such a case; she therefore ventured, after a short preamble, to place the letter in her hands.

But scarcely had Dora cast her eyes over it when the light forsook them, her head swam, and she would have fallen but for immediate

assistance. She was conveyed to a sofa, and a flood of tears came to her relief—after which, she sat silent in deep rumination, uninterrupted by those around, who beheld with true commiseration, a heart so tender and so patient pierced with so many sorrows.

"Pray keep this sad news from Frank," was the first word Dora uttered, and she was going to give further orders when Mr. Blackwell was announced, and in another moment, to her increased dismay, he stood before her.

Unable to speak, she again sunk back, pale and trembling, and Harriett observed, "that her sister was extremely unwell, and unequal to receiving a stranger."

"But not to receiving a *friend*," said the old man, sitting down by her, with a look of pity that relaxed his hard features into gentleness.

"You are indeed a friend," said Dora, as she again respired freely, and wiped away the tears which would flow perforce—"you are come to enquire after our dear Francis."

"No, I am now come to enquire after his sister; for I am well aware he is under the best hands, and although unfit to *see me*, yet not unfit to bear the change I propose, which

is that of removing him into the house opposite, which I have taken for that purpose."

"I am glad of that," said Harriett, eagerly; —"I was born in this house, but I hate it now—Stancliffe has made me loathe it."

Dora looked up reproachingly to her sister, and Mr. Blackwell resuming his usual manner, said, "You, ma'am, surely can have no wish to remain here? what has it afforded you, save unkindness, ingratitude, want, and misery?"

"Alas!" said Dora, with a deep sigh, "sorrow is to be found every where;—I shall certainly be glad to have my brother removed, (provided Mrs. Aylmer goes with him, and she will not refuse us,)—as for myself, I have another destination."—

As Dora spoke the last words, she placed the letter from Dublin in Mr. Blackwell's hands, who scarcely cast his eye over it when he exclaimed,

"All this I know—the wretched girl who is the companion of his flight, (believing him to be Frank, a single man, and the one to whom she had been taught to look up) on discovering who he was, wrote to her mother in extreme distress, a few days ago. Yesterday

another letter arrived, to tell of the duel, which was entirely of Stancliffe's provoking, and for which he is properly punished by a severe though not dangerous wound."

"His conduct in this elopement," continued Mr. Blackwell, "gives you a happy opportunity legally to emancipate yourself from worse than Egyptian bondage, and I come as your guardian to take you under my protection, and to prosecute your claims, which I can in fact do better than your own father, of whose concurrence we can have no possible doubt, but whose situation as Stancliffe's partner might have embarrassed him."

"Part from him for ever—divorce him—make myself his prosecutor—expose him—ruin him?—oh! never, *never, never.*"

The wild agony with which Dora uttered these words alarmed her friends, and Mrs. Aylmer, who had heard all in silence, approaching her, said, "Do not terrify yourself in this manner, Dora, you shall do none of these things, but you will leave for ever a wicked man who is unworthy of you, and with whom you have suffered more than is necessary to advert to:—he has in fact divorced *you*, he has abandoned you, deserted you."

Dora wept in agony.

"But God has not deserted you, he gives you a mother who has never forsaken you; and with a bleeding anxious heart, has long watched over you, though at a distance—and a friend, who will be more than your father has ever been."

"I know all your goodness—I know, too, that I love you, my more than mother, better than any human being;—but my husband is in great distress, he desires to see me, he is doubtless afflicted and repentant—I cannot refuse to comfort and aid him."

"He suffers justly—let him drink of the cup he has dealt so freely;" said Mr. Blackwell.

"Ah!" exclaimed Dora, "but if we were all so dealt by, what would become of us? Our blessed Lord came down to call sinners to repentance; to die, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;—ought not I, then, as his disciple, to bear a little longer with the man to whom I have promised obedience, and who now invites me to perform my duty?—ought I not to forgive even seventy times seven offences, if there is hope that I may save him, as there is now?"

"Dora," said Mr. Blackwell, in a firm but mild voice, "your motives are as pure as your conduct is without fault, but your judgment is wrong—you have adopted ideas neither scripture nor reason justify; for though they call for the rational submission and proper obedience of a wife to her husband, it is under the idea that his power is exercised in wisdom and love—if a man acts as if devoid of either, he compels the woman to become her own guardian, and exercise her own judgment, upon those points which concern her happiness. Such has long been your case, and I am fully persuaded, that had Stancliffe been married to a high spirited woman, who would have conceded his rights, yet have asserted her own, he never would have played the fool as he has done—your self-denying economy made him extravagant and avaricious,—your abilities and exertions plunged him in indolence, and from that very circumstance he became a gambler, because, though idle, his mind was active—his violent temper increased from your submission, and he played the tiger because a lamb was always near him;—naturally selfish, and having no principle of religious self-controul from within, he certainly

required some coercive operation from without, which (since the death of his father, and in the absence of yours) you should have endeavoured to supply, as many women do."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Aylmer, "what could a girl so young, so timid, and so affectionate, exact?"

"Not that, madam, which your sex are too apt to seek, *power*, but *justice*—the right to be treated with the kindness due to a faithful wife, the consideration and respect claimed by a gentlewoman. When these are not accorded, what is a wife but a servant without wages? a slave, whose bondage death or infamy alone can loosen?"

"The violent should be met by violence—the ungenerous overbearing spirit, repelled by its own weapons; but gentle and meek as Dora's temper has ever been, she is too high-minded to descend to the language of a scolding vixen, or the wheedling of a cunning coaxer—she used perseveringly the only arms her nature, and her principles as a Christian, permitted, long-suffering, patience, forgetfulness of injury, and cheerful compliance—what could she do more?" said Mrs. Aylmer.

"Nothing, madam, to win a generous mind,

even if subject to many errors; but Stancliffe was not of that description, except by fits and starts:—with considerable abilities, and occasionally good propensities, and the promise of virtue, he has been ever unsteady, volatile, and inconstant, in pursuit either of good or evil, shewing a singular deficiency in that property in which his wife excelled.—'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel,' says the patriarch; and when she saw this disposition, ought she not to have opposed it by every possible means; and engrafted her own mild firmness on his irresolution, her endurance on his?"—

"Impossible, sir—man will not be taught by woman; ask your own heart, Mr. Blackwell!"

"I am a bachelor, madam, and not one of the initiated, I confess; and the reply my heart makes, would be to own myself a stubborn subject—nor can I say that I should wish my daughter to stoop to conduct unworthy of herself, in order to *manage* her husband; yet when I look round the world, and see women every way far inferior to Dora, preserve spouses originally inferior to Stancliffe also, without suffering the open injuries, or the

secret miseries which have afflicted her, how can I help concluding that she has 'loved not wisely, but too well?' and that suffering martyrdom with the patience of a saint, is not the way to reform a sinner."

"You are right, sir," said Dora, slowly, as under the influence of full conviction, "*perfectly right*—poor Stancliffe's mind, ruined by excessive indulgence in childhood, and the unhappy liberty given to his youth by a residence abroad, required a very different helpmate to what I have been. Alas! I have injured whilst I sought to bless him—God forbid that I should forsake him now he is sunk in the abyss where my weakness and blindness have helped to plunge him—oh! no."

As Dora spoke, she rose from the sofa, assuming a strength she was far from feeling, and indicating by the action as well as by her words, her intention of going to Stancliffe. As nothing could be farther from Mr. Blackwell's intention than to increase the bias of her mind this way, he now began strongly to descant on the faults of Stancliffe towards her and others, and insist on the folly, madness, indelicacy, and even wickedness, of again, by such an action, re-uniting herself to a bad

man, and thus giving a sanction to his profligacy. A conclusion made by Mrs. Aylmer in language equally strong, and more persuasive, as she added,

"Surely, Dora, you will not so disgrace the education I gave you, nor so wound the heart of her who loves you as a mother, as to countenance adultery by your presence!—to share your husband with a wanton."

Dora started—her pallid cheeks became crimson, and she covered them with her trembling hands, whilst her bosom heaved with thick-coming sobs.—Mrs. Aylmer, pierced to the heart with grief and compassion, added,

"I see you will not leave me, Dora, you will return to the friend of your youth—the pious, happy path, in which your early days were passed."

"Oh! no, no, do not tempt me—he is my husband, and with all his faults I know he will not expose me to the evil you fear—he is too proud so to degrade the woman who bears his name—he may not love me, but surely he cannot despise me."

Dora wept long and bitterly, but she persisted in her determination, repeatedly observing, "that Mr. Blackwell had judged

rightly, he had opened her eyes to the deficiency of her own conduct, which had been prejudicial to the vacillating mind of one so impatient of restraint, and injured by indulgence, she therefore owed him reparation for the past, as well as compassion in his present distress."

The very word "reparation," as applied by her, could not be endured by those friends who knew that her husband never had, never could deserve her; and deeply as they felt for her present distress, both became seriously angry; and Mr. Blackwell solemnly assured her, that if she joined Stancliffe again, let her distress be what it might, she should never receive a shilling from him till the moment when she could legally claim it, and he now informed her that he was aware Stancliffe had forfeited his bond to her father since his arrival in Dublin, by frequenting a gaming house, in consequence of which she must experience soon the most abject poverty.

"Alas!" said Dora, internally, "here is a new reason surely why I should fly to him, wretched as he must be;" but she did not reply further than to look earnestly towards Mrs. Aylmer—to that beseeching look she answered,

"Dora, though I perfectly approve of all Mr. Blackwell has said, and can by no means blame the resolution he has made—yet—I am a woman, you have been that to me which you cannot be to him, a child fed at my board, a daughter bound to my very heart, should you be in actual want I must relieve you—my last morsel must be shared with you—but my competence is not riches, I have nothing to squander, you *know* I have not."

Dora did know this; she knew also that her friend was charitable and generous, and at the present moment low in the purse, not having been prepared for this painful, unexpected journey. Exhausted with the dreadful excitation of the hour, and aware that she had still much to think of and to suffer, she slowly withdrew to look up in solitude to that power which alone could give the strength and composure so necessary to her trying situation.

When Frank was informed that Stancliffe was unwell and had sent for Dora, contrary to the fears of those around him, he readily agreed that she ought to go, only begging he might see her alone for a single moment:—they then proposed removing him, saying, "it would be soon done, and the room prepared

for him much pleasanter."—"If *she* says it is right, take me any where, without her, all places are alike to me," was his answer.

Dora was interrupted in her retirement by Harriett, who called her to Frank; and she hastily wiped her tears, put on a bonnet to shade her swollen eye-lids, and forced herself to speak in a calm if not a cheerful voice as she approached the bed, and stooped down to catch his whispered words.

"My dear sister, be quite easy about me, I will be very still, and shall get better in time —but, Dora, whether I live or die, I will not betray our secret—you can rely upon me, cannot you?"

Her look and her kiss answered for her, for her heart was too full to allow her to speak, and her resolution to go was now really shaken —she felt that if her removal should prove prejudicial to Frank, she could never forgive herself, since it was impossible for her not to see that a stronger claim on her attentions was made by the injured and unoffending brother, than by the cruel, unworthy, and self-divorced husband.

Frank read the struggle of her mind in her countenance, and he again assured her, he

should do well, and directed her where to find his little (very little) stock of pocket money. Dora was roused by this to consider the difficulties of this nature by which she was surrounded, and an enquiry at her banker's soon informed her that Mr. Blackwell's information was but too true. Stancliffe had drawn every thing out in his power, and had subjected himself to the conditions imposed in such a case by her father; but her immediate wants were supplied at length by poor Mrs. Judith, for whose personal comforts she engaged Mrs. Aylmer to provide during her absence.

Dreading the increase of expenses, poor Dora set out on the only voyage she had ever adventured, without a servant; and so great were the inconveniences she suffered on her landing, that could she have beheld them in prospect, they would have been too appalling for a woman of her description to have encountered; but truly as our great poet said, "when the mind's at ease the body's delicate:" —the intense anxiety, the sorrowful reflections, the touching remembrances, and the fearful prospect before her, so filled up every power of thought, and so occupied her feelings, that lesser evils lost their usual effects

and even pain and weakness yielded to the stimulus of sorrow and solicitude.

At length Dora reached the place from whence her guiding letter was dated, and was thankful to find the situation was quiet, and so far suitable for an invalid; and in answer to her first inquiry, she had the satisfaction to find, that although Stancliffe still kept his bed, his case was considered no worse, and her informer, the mistress of the lodgings, added:

"And if so be, ma'am, you're the sister, or the likes of that, which he have bin expicting, I hopes you'll jist interfere a bit for the young cratur his wife, for she's crazy, ye see, by reason he won't see her at all, any how, for this fortnight, but jist sends down the nurse to say 'tis no use coming at all, for that the doctors say as he mistn't be distarbt by her."

"His wife?" gasped Dora.

"Oh! yes, miss, quite a dacent young body, but not a gintlewoman, that's for sure; and sure any body may see she's not come o' the likes of him and you, who are brother and sister, I doubt not all the world over; but a wife's a wife, and a man's best friend in the hour o' trouble, and to my thinkings,"—

Dora, feeling as if she could bear no more,

used the little strength her agitation left her, to request that Mr. Stancliffe, or at least his nurse, might be informed " that the lady from England had arrived."

" Oh! to be sure I will go up, and will I not make bould too jist to stip in myself? why not? seeing his frind has bin with him these two hours—never's the time he's denied for sure."

" What friend?" said Dora.

" Oh! ma'am, it's not I that shall say a word aginst him, for an angel I take him to be, that's for sure; yet, as I said before, a wife's a wife, and to kip her away, and to lit oder people in, it's not to my mind."

These observations continued till the soft voice of the truly Irish hostess was lost from the closing of the door after her:—her information, and the train of new and distressing thoughts it had awakened, had so completely overpowered Dora, that she now felt as if she had indeed undertaken that which she could not perform; and the denunciations of Mr. Blackwell and Mrs. Aylmer, again sounded in her ears:—twice had the landlady invited her into the room before her shaking limbs permitted her to accept the summons; and when

at length she stepped forward, it was with the breathless trepidation of one who enters on a scene of terror.

In a bed supported by pillows, in the same state apparently as she had often seen him, appeared Stancliffe, looking less ill than might have been expected; for it is certain that a deep hue of shame suffused his face, and a person standing close by him looked the paler of the two. Dora thought she had seen this person before; but her head swam, her eyes refused the light, and she sunk senseless on the bed, ere she had the power of speaking.

When Dora came to herself, she was on the chair occupied lately by the stranger, who was holding something to her lips—the light fell full on his face, and looking on him, she exclaimed in a faint voice,

"Arthur Sydenham!" then, recollecting herself, said, "I beg pardon, I am confused."

"No, no, you are right, Dora," said Stancliffe, stooping over her as well as he was able, "it is Mr. Sydenham, who, I believe, knew you when you were a child in Wales—to him you are indebted for my life—(so far as it is a debt") he added in a low and broken voice.

"I shall resign my office of head nurse, now

Do— now Mrs. Stancliffe has arrived," said Sydenham, in a tone intended to be cheerful, but by no means answering to the speaker's wishes.

"How have you left Frank, Dora?" said Stancliffe, with a look of great anxiety.

"Extremely weak, but doing well."

"Poor fellow!—that is what they say of me—I have lost a great deal of blood, but nothing compared with his loss, so he may well be weak—but I deserved it—he—ah! how very different is his situation to mine; he is, as I have told you, Sydenham, so often, the very best creature that ever was born—the most generous."

Stancliffe's head sunk on his pillow, and Dora thought he wept; her heart was touched with the deepest sympathy, and she felt thankful now that she had undertaken a journey which already repaid her by the hopes it held out of a change for the better, in him with whom "she had garnered up her soul;"—so rapidly do circumstances change the feelings of the female so situated. In the relief thus offered to persons of great sensibility, the power of enduring its inflictions is in a measure obtained, the very acuteness of our tor

tures compels us to look round for aid, and seize on the first shadow which can cheat us into ease.

Mr. Sydenham went away very soon, and after his departure Stancliffe was eloquent in his praise—he recapitulated the circumstances of his duel, which appeared to have sprung from a slight difference in opinion with a gentleman in a coffee-house, from which he had been led to use that insulting language to which his habitual treatment of his own family subjected him, and which the customs of the country he was visiting by no means permitted. As he was not deficient in personal courage, and was decidedly so in those qualities which lead to explanation, it was no wonder that the event which chastized him took place; but as his antagonist was a man of much feeling, it was softened to him as far as possible, since he had lost no time in procuring for him the friendly offices of an English gentleman then passing through Dublin, from a tour to the Irish lakes, and who, on learning his name, entered with increased interest into the offices of humanity.

This gentleman, our readers will perceive, was Arthur Sydenham, the playmate in child-

hood, and the friend in youth, to the ill-used and now deserted Dora; of whom he had thought much too often for his happiness, but not for his virtue, for his manhood at this time displayed the promise of his youth; and although a more than ordinary degree of thoughtfulness was remarked in him, and strangers wondered "why any shade of melancholy should rest on the mind of one so happily situated, and so highly gifted;" his parents, sisters, and friends, could scarcely desire him to be other than they found him.

Of the character and manners of Mr. Stancliffe, Sydenham knew nothing, beyond the folly and madness which had led to his present situation, and which was loudly spoken of, and of course gave him a pang beyond what his compassion could inflict for the husband, by compelling him to feel for the wife. Indeed the offender himself, when reduced to weakness, and stretched on the bed of pain, was fully aware that his conduct had been most reprehensible; and as he could not tell the world how many causes had combined to awaken the irritation which in fact amounted to madness, and thence produced such terrible results, (since these causes were combined with

the crimes which he shrunk from exposing) it was evident that he must continue to suffer the penalties he had drawn upon himself, and be denied even that pity generally accorded to the suffering.

In the frame of mind produced by such reflections, and in a state of extreme bodily weakness from the loss of blood, (a circumstance which drew reflections on the state to which he had reduced poor Frank, of the most heart-rending nature) he was found by Sydenham. So cheering and consolatory was the voice of kindness in such a moment, to one who was a "stranger in a strange land," and conscious of meriting punishment beyond what he suffered, that it unlocked all the sluices of feeling, and presented him to Sydenham in the light of an erring but most interesting man, whose person and manners were indeed well calculated to impress even the heart of Dora, young and inexperienced as she had been at the time of her marriage, and also unhappily situated in her family. Stancliffe confirmed this impression by speaking most handsomely of his adversary, alluding to remote causes for his own awakened irritation, and wishing for the assistance of his wife as the only person

on whose care and skill he could rely for his recovery; yet observing, "that as she was engaged in nursing her sick brother, he could not blame her if she did not obey his summons."

As Stancliffe uttered the last words, he was evidently in great confusion, and uttered them with difficult respiration; but as the feelings of his hearer were also awakened into a state of solicitude, and almost alarm, it passed unnoticed. Sydenham endeavoured to fulfil the wishes of the medical attendants in soothing the mind of the wounded man; and either from his kindness, his reasoning, or the weakness of the patient, it was certain he left him at least more tranquil than he found him.

A very short time had sufficed to cool the guilty passion of Stancliffe for the poor girl who was its victim, and whom at length he had taken away more in consequence of a preconcerted plan than the dictates of vicious love; since the consequence of his rage towards the innocent object of his suspicion, had nearly destroyed every sensation save that of fear for the consequences. He left home under an alarm of spirits, an agitation of nerves, which rendered him incapable of rejoicing in the

success of his enterprise; and his eyes had been so forcibly opened to the wickedness of his own conduct, and the difficulties with which it had environed him, that he could not close them to it—if he endeavoured to forget his own thoughts by conversation, he was compelled to find that the few ideas, and the ignorance of his companion, soon exhausted his hopes of relief from that quarter; and in the present state of his mind, the poor girl appeared much more deficient than she really was; he cursed his blindness for having tied himself to a fool, and lamented that his success afforded no triumph, his sin no pleasure.

Wine was the next resource—and good wine and gay companions may be had in Dublin in perfection; but their stimulating powers were little likely to aid in tranquillizing a mind already too much excited, and which was the more affected from the novelty of the application. Hitherto, when out of humour with himself and the world, or fatigued with business, he had shut himself up in his chamber, to indulge disgust or exclude intrusion; and intoxication was never his resource, which was certainly the worst an irritable man like him could adopt. He awoke a fever in his frame

which threw him into a state little short of delirium, led him again to play, where, although he lost no sum of importance, because he played only for that which he had about him, he yet injured himself irreparably by forfeiting his bond, and thereby subjecting himself to complete dependance on Mr. Hemingford, a state most galling to his proud and irritable spirit, and which in a cooler moment he would never have incurred. The ill-humour arising from this incident led to that provocation which produced the challenge.

It may be readily conceived that the unhappy creature who had left her humble home in the hope of becoming a grand lady, and perhaps honourably so, partook largely of these miseries; and as he was conveyed to the nearest house where he could be accommodated after his wound, she was left in a most distressing state of anxiety, which was only exchanged for the knowledge of a misfortune which left her exposed to every possible evil. He had revealed her real claims upon him to the surgeon, but from the moment of Sydenham's visit became anxious to the utmost to keep her very existence a secret from him; and such was his solicitude, that it greatly

increased the illness under which he laboured, and for some days placed him in considerable danger.

During those days, the attendance of Sydenham was unremitting, and conceiving, from something that occurred, that he was in want of money, he readily supplied pecuniary aid, and had been receiving warm thanks for it at the very time Dora arrived: his relief from this source, and his amendment, gave him the spirits he evinced by his warm praises of Sydenham; but when they had subsided, he sunk into extreme dejection, and a state of nervous inquietude so great, as to threaten the return of all those bad symptoms from which he had so lately escaped.

In truth, the sight of his wife, calm and gentle as she was, awoke in him so many painful remembrances, and so many fears for the future, that he bitterly repented having sent for her; and he soon began to shew towards her, that ill-humour which was in him the unfailing accompaniment of self-reproach. He was in continual fear that she should learn more respecting his conduct than he apprehended she knew; and when from the nurse he found that she was informed by the mistress

of the house of the visits of Alice, and that she termed herself "his wife," the persuasion that Dora despised and hated him, took such full possession of his mind, that every action of her life only tended to confirm it :—every time she began to speak he expected it was to reproach him, and he was almost angry that she did not, that he might in her words find some excuse for the temper he indulged, and he imputed her silence only to the excess of her contempt. Although considerably better, he positively refused to part with the nurse, and manifested a kind of horror at the idea of being alone with his wife for a moment, and never ceased wishing for Sydenham.

Sydenham now came seldom, but his visits had ever a most salutary effect; during the whole time he stayed, Stancliffe was calm if not cheerful, and even after he was gone, his mind would for some time retain the impression, and seem as if struggling with himself, and endeavouring to make himself worthy the friendship of one whom he loved and admired. At these times he would fix his eyes swimming in tears on Dora, take her hand, and lament that he had spoken so hastily, but exclaim, "you must hate me, I know you do, Dora!"

In her extreme anxiety to guard his health, she generally evaded any answer that could have a tendency to increase his agitation, and never failed to speak soothingly and kindly. She would say, with a smile, " I came here to do you good, not to dispute with you, my dear:"—or " get well, my love, and then we will talk about these things;" but she made no violent protestations of that she could not feel—the pity and anxiety to do him good, which were the governing motives of her conduct, appeared in every word and action; reproach was alike distant from her thoughts and her eye, and her attention to his every comfort was unremitting, but she could go no farther at the present period.

The power to continue her awful and wearisome duties soon became much more difficult; for although her friends blamed her for loving her husband too well, it was an object of no little care to her to nurse the love she still felt in her heart, and keep the flame, so long and so cruelly damped, from utter extinction. Perceiving how much better he was always made, in every sense of the word, by the visits of Mr. Sydenham, and fearful lest his pleasant and varied conversation should

in time prove not less desirable to herself, she determined to seize the opportunity of his stay for getting the little air which had hitherto been denied to her; and as both the gentlemen approved her proposal, for several successive days she took a short turn in the Phœnix park, always avoiding all conversation with her hostess. One morning on her return, however, this person way-laid her as she passed through the hall, and so pressed her to enter the adjoining parlour, that she could not refuse, being indeed apprehensive that she wished for payment of their lodgings.

Yet the moment of her entrance Mrs. Macgillan vanished, but as speedily returned, leading, or rather dragging, a young woman in a dirty white gown, whose whole appearance bespoke wretchedness, if not want, and who advanced with a reluctance seldom exhibited by those who beg, in a country where eloquence is indigenous. The landlady pushed her forward, and then retired, saying, as she shut the door, " I've done my duty to the poor cratur any how—God help the mother of her, say I."

These words struck Dora as applying to her for whom the speaker had already evinced so

much pity, though under a mistaken idea, and who was the last person on earth whom she would willingly have seen—she tried to pass, but the young woman by an effort, stepped between her and the door, and clasping her hands, said beseechingly,

"Oh! ma'am, I beg pardon, but pray, pray,"—

The look of humility, the voice of intreaty, in which the words were uttered, would have disarmed Dora, even if she had felt towards her the strongest indignation, for she was one "who never, *never* turned her ear away" from a suffering fellow-creature; but she had contemplated the fate of this poor girl as one more sinned against than sinning; and although her mind revolted from the idea of meeting her, it was less from anger and jealousy than a dread of finding in Alice a new accuser of her husband, and of a sense of embarrassment from the peculiarity of her situation.

The beauty of Alice had consisted in a fair and florid complection, which gave softness and vivacity to features of a common description:—she was now pale and haggard, her eyes were red with weeping, and the cleanly smartness of her rustic dress exchanged for

dirty finery, which she cared not to arrange, and had the sense to despise. Shame and sorrow were imprinted in her person, attitude, and voice, so strongly, that a heart much harder than poor Dora's would yet have stopped for a moment to listen to her tale of sorrow; it was no wonder, therefore, that she said in tremulous but pitiful accents,

"What can I do for you?—what were you going to ask me?"

Simple as the words were, their effect on the petitioner was affecting, almost alarming—she dropped instantly on her knees, and throwing out her arms, caught the skirts of Dora, which she pressed with convulsive motion to her lips and to her breast, saying, as well as tears and suffocating sobs permitted,

"Forgive me, madam, forgive me—I didn't know—indeed I didn't know he was married; I was a wicked, foolish girl, but not so bad as you think me—and I have suffered since then every thing—I have indeed——my own mother would hardly know me."

Dora cast her eyes on the faded face before her, and doubted not the truth of the assertion, and tears of the deepest compassion coursed down her cheeks; but so fully did the enor-

mous cruelty, deception, and wickedness of Stancliffe towards this unhappy being, strike upon her mind at the same moment, that the flush of indignation covered her countenance —she hastily raised the poor creature, or rather sought to raise her, for Alice would not rise till, comprehending her motive, she said solemnly,

I do forgive you—I do *sincerely*; and if you will be a good girl, and return to your mother, I will befriend you—I will, indeed."

"May God in heaven bless you—Oh! may he bless you for ever."

As Alice uttered this adjuration, she arose, but was evidently unable to stand; and Dora taking hold of her arm, supported her to a chair, and fearful of exposing the shocking business still further, went herself, though with trembling steps, to fetch her some wine; but the action, as one of unmerited kindness, so affected the poor creature she sought to relieve, that she went into a fit of hysterical weeping, which alarmed the whole house, and reached even the chamber of the invalid.

Terrible as was the presence of any third person at such a moment, Dora could not abandon the object of her compassion till she had

recovered composure; when, fearful of hearing any detail of wrongs she could not redress, and sins she could not forgive, she hastily pressed her to say what were her present wants, and to offer her the money she might need for her return to England.

"I have nothing—nothing at all, I gave my last guinea and nearly all my clothes, to pay for our lodgings—the doctor gave me ten pounds, and said I must come no more, and that the gentleman would send and pay the lodgings, but he never did send;—so they took every thing from me:—Oh! what I have suffered! and then to be told I must come no more, to be left in this heathen land, and the wide seas between me and my own home—I have thought a thousand times my heart would break, but dear heart! I couldn't die."

How often had this been her own experience; every word, every look of this unfortunate creature, only presented her husband in a more reprehensible point of view; and his carelessness, (although somewhat softened by the illness which had increased at the period to which Alice alluded,) as to her situation, was so selfish and base, as to render him more hateful than even the insane rage which had

once placed him on the verge of murder. The terrible agitation of spirits these thoughts brought upon Dora was such, that she found it necessary to close a scene which threatened to overwhelm all the little strength she had, and to produce a confusion of intellect which had many times assailed her and threatened loss of reason. She therefore opened her purse, and gave with "no niggard hand," the means of returning home to Alice, and requested the mistress of the house, (who was already too much in the secret for further disguise,) to forward her views, promising also that she would write a letter to Mr. Blackwell, which should insure her a kind reception at home, and also provide for the restoration of her clothes by regularly discharging the arrears of rent at their late lodgings.

Alice was thankful even to speechless gratitude, but yet she lingered—she held her benefactress by the gown—she had evidently something to say which she could not utter, and which Dora dreaded to hear, for she felt that she could grant no more.

"And I must go," said Alice, at last; "and I must see him no more."

Dora was silent.

"He has ruined me, and made me miserable, and I can never shew my face again in my own country, and I mustn't tell him of his wickedness! I mustn't say, see what a wretch you have made of me!"

Dora, unable to undergo more, hastily withdrew, and finding that she was utterly incapable of resuming composure, retired to her own bed-room, which was a small chamber at the top of the house, where, having fastened the door, she knelt down, and in earnest prayer besought Almighty aid in quelling the deep indignation, the repelling contempt, which had arisen in her breast, and which incessantly urged her to quit for ever the presence of a man whom she should henceforward behold with loathing.

Tears, prayers, and still more, long meditation and reflection, succeeded in giving tranquillity to her wounded spirits, and renewing in her the resolution to attend with patience and persevering vigilance to the present and eternal welfare of her husband, and still watch over him in the hope (weak as that hope was become) that her labour would not be in vain.

So completely had Dora been absorbed in the painful reflections, and severe schoolings

of her heart, that when aroused by the tapping of the nurse at her door, she was surprised to find how long a period had elapsed since she had entered her room, and that the busy anxious state of her mind, had made her forget even necessary food. She descended with a determination to bury all the past in oblivion, as far as it was possible ; but the first glance she had of the countenance of Stancliffe, told her that the secret was discovered, and she doubted not the interference of the landlady had extended to procuring Alice even the interview she had desired, and which it was but natural to suppose the poor girl had persisted in requesting.

Stancliffe was evidently ill, and averse to meeting her eyes ; but he was uncomplaining and gentle, and submitted to the punishment under which he suffered in a manner so different to his general conduct, that Dora, like most of her sex on similar occasions, was soon relieved from the new and distressing sensasions of anger towards him, which had so lately harrassed her. She could not forget the face and voice of Alice—they haunted her perpetually, and conjured up that of Frank also, and every other association by which Stancliffe

stood in the light of a violent, unfeeling, capricious, or dissolute man—a man, too, from whom the wise and the good would have separated her. But she looked again upon him, and beheld him as one suffering and penitent, and she felt that she could yet pardon and perhaps love—might not the time come when she should even rejoice over him and be proud of him?

Her thoughts were interrupted by her husband, who, calling her to his bed-side, thanked her with great emotion for her kindness to one "whose name he would never utter in her presence, and whom he never desired to see again." Dora made little answer beyond desiring him to compose himself, for although sincerely desirous to accept of any thing in the way of apology or promise for the future, she could not help deeming him cruel towards the wretched victim of his lawless passions, even in the assurances thus tendered to herself. She wished him to be sensible of his own injustice, and to lament his crimes to God rather than towards herself; but she could not "break the bruised reed," and she was thankful for any thing which looked like feeling in the right way.

Some days passed in dejection but calmness, which had so salutary an effect upon the health of the invalid, that he left his bed, called in his accounts, and prepared for his return to England, from whence very favourable accounts of Frank had been several times received; but a letter now reached them of a very different description.

Mr. Hemingford had left the bond given by Stancliffe with directions how to act, in case he should fall again into the error from which it sought to restrain him, in the hands of his attorney. That person had now ascertained the fact, together with other particulars which were of a nature, in his own apprehension, to justify any rigour the law authorised, and in consequence had proceeded to take possession of Stancliffe's house as tangible property, specified as forfeited to his partner, and Mr. Hazlehurst wrote in great anxiety for directions how to proceed in a case so perplexing and distressing.

Dora read the letter in surprise to her husband. "It is all right," said Stancliffe, "your father has such power; he can take all I have in the world and hold it until the partnership has expired, and he has paid himself all it

owes him. I cared not then how strong the bond was made, for I was wretched and ashamed, and I dictated it myself."

"But what is to become of us? how are we to exist for the next two years?"

"Will Mr. Blackwell do nothing, think you?"

"No;—he has solemnly declared that he will not; he will do any thing for *me*, if—but"—

"*If—but*—what do you mean? tell me, Dora, for as soon as my arm is better, I will do any thing; I will, indeed—you shall see how I will exert myself."

Dora wept abundantly.

"Tell me what he said, Dora, I beseech you?"

"He wanted me to leave you—that is, he thought me wrong in coming here, for he knew all about Alice, whose mother it seems is his tenant—and"—

Stancliffe turned his face on the pillow and groaned bitterly.

"I am not going, my dear;—I refused him and Mrs. Aylmer too; therefore you cannot doubt but I shall remain, and be"—

"Be a wretch, a most miserable wretch—

no, no—I do not ask it, Dora, you have suffered enough, you shall go to the friends who love you."

"But you love me, *now?*" said Dora, eagerly gazing upon him, as if she thought he would die in the act of evincing, for the first time, true generosity and self-renunciation.

"Yes, Dora, I *do* love you," said Stancliffe, after a long pause; "and if it please God to give me strength, I will prove that I know your value, we will shew them all what we can do, my love."

There was an earnest tenderness in these words, which went beyond their simple meaning in the expression conveyed; and although Dora durst not place the reliance on them natural to a heart so confiding as hers, (for disappointment so severe and reiterated as she had experienced, must damp the most sanguine, and chill the most loving heart,) yet still something was evidently gained—the humbling of a proud spirit is a great and difficult step; it is the first breaking of that rock from which the tears of true repentance may flow, to fertilize a barren soil.

As soon as possible they returned, and trode on their native shore almost pennyless, though

indebted considerably for their accommodation to Mr. Sydenham, who left Dublin the week before them. The loss of his late excellent home did not appear to give Stancliffe any comparative concern, with that which he suffered from the fear of seeing any person; and so earnest was he to get into a house, and when arrived at an inn, to take possession of a bed, that notwithstanding all the promises he had of late been in the habit of making to himself and her, Dora felt extremely afraid that he would again seek to shroud himself in that asylum, and for several days her fears appeared realized; but the moment she declared "that she could not bring herself to live any longer without seeing Frank, now she was so near him," he declared himself ready to attend her; and it was evident from that time he became, to the most distressing degree, jealous of her leaving him, and determined to watch her continually.

The meeting between this affectionate brother and sister was affecting, though both suppreset the emotions which swelled at their bosoms. Frank was shocked to see how ill, and even aged, his beloved Dora appeared; but she had great satisfaction in perceiving

his amendment, and though well aware that the sight of him, and the occasional enjoyment of his company, would be her best solace in the sad change to which she was now subjected, she earnestly urged him to seek the comforts offered under Mr. Blackwell's protection, as soon as he was capable of bearing removal.

To this Frank consented, under the full persuasion that he should, by some means connected with this change, be enabled to assist her on whom he was continually thinking, and for whom he could consent to any thing. Mr. Blackwell had been gone some weeks, Mrs. Aylmer was anxious to go, and it had been settled that the housekeeper of the former would accompany his ward whenever the physician permitted him to undertake the journey.

Harriett was not at home, Mrs. Aylmer did not appear, but poor Mrs. Judith, who had been long excluded from the sick room, rushed from the parlour on hearing Dora descend, and seizing her round the neck, wept over her, with the fondness of childhood, and the imbecility of dotage, persisting, however, with a pertinacity resembling neither, that she never would lose sight of her more, and re-

peating over and over again, this determination.

Pure affection, wheresoever it is manifested, is dear to the heart, and the kiss was as warm as the tear of Dora, when she returned the poor old woman's fond embrace, but nothing could exceed the embarrassment she felt on her account. Something must unquestionably be settled respecting her, and it was imperative on those who had taken her from her " pleasant home," to provide one for her —besides, her annuity was their only means of help, she was the last person who gave them money, and the first to offer them more. " But would Everton be kind to her? would he in narrow lodgings, endure that wearisome discourse which he bore so ill in a large house where he was so seldom subjected to it? and in his present state of weak health and subjugated spirits, would it be right to try the weak efforts of infant virtues by so severe a test?"

There was no reasoning with Mrs. Judith, who insisted on returning with her Dora, " the delight of her eyes, the comfort of her age:" whilst they both stood thus overwhelmed with sorrow on the one hand, and embarrassment

on the other, Mrs. Aylmer and Harriett entered together, Frank being then sufficiently recovered to admit their going out for a short walk in comfort.

The sight of her beloved friend, her more than mother, was a cordial to Dora's heart, for she had not dared to hope she should see her, and, "perhaps the interview was even now undesired," crossed her mind; but the consequences of Stancliffe's faults had gone so far beyond Mrs. Aylmer's expectations in depriving him of his house, and his power as a partner, and of course his rank in society, that although she was more offended with him than ever, she could not fail to feel increased pity for the unhappy being thus determinately, and therefore indissolubly, linked to his poverty and disgrace. On understanding the subject in dispute, she persuaded Mrs. Judith to resign her young friend for the present, and observed, that as the whole family were about to separate, and the house had been taken for a year, Mr. and Mrs. Stancliffe were welcome to come into it for the remainder of that time, in which case the old lady could remain in her present apartment.

This offer was accepted by Dora with much

thankfulness, as one which, in their circumstances, was of great moment; but when she got home, and told Stancliffe, he made her a hasty assurance, confirmed by an oath, that he would never enter it; he would never live in a street at all, and especially one so near his own house."

"Yet, although a painful situation, it has great conveniences, as it is close to the counting-house."

"And what have I to do there?"

"You have still property there, and may be employed usefully and profitably—at least I can get something to do there which will help to support us; and my convenience in such a case ought to be consulted—I am sure, Everton, you will think so by and bye."

This was the first claim Dora had ever made upon consideration for herself; it was received with silence, but after a while he spoke very affectionately of Frank, and enquired after aunt Judith. Dora candidly told him all her fears for the future, but added, how much she considered it their duty to render her comfortable.

"Yes, yes, I see all that, the poor old soul has a right to be considered, undoubtedly; I

will do my best—and Dora, if I live a whole month without kicking Fury, or d—ing her quotations, surely I may have some hope of myself."

"And you will do both, my love, never fear, if you not only make a resolution to do your best, but in conscious fear of your own weakness, look earnestly to heaven for assistance."

No further objection was made, and when poor Frank was gone, and Mrs. Aylmer had given a parting present to the daughter her heart still bled over, they took possession of the house, to the great joy of Mrs. Judith, who did not see Stancliffe on his first entrance, for Dora, with her usual delicate foresight, ushered him into a back room, and spoke of him (as indeed she might justly do) as a confirmed invalid. She placed her little household on the most economic footing possible, consisting with the comforts of her aged boarder, and her ailing husband, and then waited on Mr. Hazlehurst to enquire how far the proceedings of the attorney were sanctioned by her father, and whether she could be allowed to receive aid from the concern in return for personal services.

The worthy old man was in the first instance

overcome with sorrow, to receive as a suppliant the daughter and wife of his employers; but he readily granted all she requested for herself, observing, "that he was confident, when Mr. Hemingford knew further particulars of the case, that every thing would at her intreaty be restored, although denied to her husband;" he observed, "that the attorney was assured she received a handsome income from Mr. Blackwell, and as he himself had understood the same, it was surely unnecessary to trouble herself further."

Dora was compelled reluctantly to undeceive him, and inform him how she stood with her guardian; and he then earnestly entered into her views, and even offered to fit up a small chamber in the place, where Mr. Stancliffe might engage as a clerk, and receive wages from him without being subjected to be seen by any one, save when he chose to appear to strangers, in his proper place, as the first person in the firm. In any capacity, he observed, help would at that time be welcome, for never had they been more busy.

Dora related the former part of her negotiation with pleasure; but so eager did Stancliffe appear to close with the proposal, that

she almost dreaded mentioning the latter assurance, lest it should occasion him to make those exertions of which he had said so much. Nor was the conclusion wrong; weak as he was, and with his wound still in a state of great irritation, he entered with avidity into employment; and although it was at first done with an air of great secresy, he soon became so immersed in business, and alive to the pursuit of that wealth which he had no immediate prospect of enjoying, that he forgot all caution of disguise, and now he was no longer master of the place, fulfilled all the duties properly which belonged to the character. His readiness, activity, and ability, rendered him the moving spring which set all others in due order and action; and every person about the place spoke of his appearance as a kind of resurrection they had never hoped to witness, and he was astonished to find that he could take so much interest, and feel his mind so agreeably excited by the very circumstances of hurry, and multiplicity of claims, which he had hitherto constantly shunned, in those days when his services were most valuable.

But never had the patience of Dora been more tried by the idleness of days past, than

it was by the unwise, inconsistent industry of the present time; and every hour she besought him earnestly to take the care so necessary for his reduced state of health. She considered the great change he had so suddenly adopted, and the total absorption he evinced, as a species of self-immolation; and while she rejoiced in perceiving the vigour of his mind unimpaired, and the resolution he exhibited, she yet trembled for the effects of exertions to which he was so evidently inadequate, that he was frequently brought home in a state of exhaustion that threatened immediate dissolution.

Before the task was completed, Stancliffe was literally unable to leave his bed, but his anxiety still prevented him from repose; and although in a different spirit from that with which he formerly harrassed his wife with business, he still kept her perpetually employed in affairs connected with it, and all her ceaseless cares as a nurse, and her intreaties as an anxious wife, were disregarded. The vanity of displaying those talents for business he had so long suffered to lie dormant, unquestionably mingled with a resolution arising from better motives, and together hurried him

into a new species of error which was of the most painful nature to poor Dora, as she continually foresaw that when he became most worthy to live, it was probable he would die.

She judged but with too much certainty, for in addition to the extreme weakness contracted by stretching his constitution beyond its powers, he caught a cold by standing in the large warehouse, which, though slight, fell with fatal effect on his attenuated frame, and though slow, was soon sufficiently marked to alarm every person who witnessed its effects, save the sufferer himself. All confinement was now become so irksome to him, in consequence of the accession of spirits he had been sensible of during the late bustle, that his ill-humour again returned ; alas ! it was at the best " scaithed, not killed," for very imperfect were his ideas of religious self-controul ; and every day, and almost every hour, told Dora that all her work was to do over again, notwithstanding all that had been suffered or gained.

CHAP. XIII.

Dora had the satisfaction about this time of seeing Harriett for an hour or two previous to her setting out for Smyrna, having, by her father's direction, joined a respectable person going out as a governess. From her she learned many particulars respecting Frank's present state of health and comforts of the most satisfactory nature, and she endeavoured strongly to impress on the mind of Harriett such a belief of the improvement in Stancliffe's conduct, and such pity for his present state, as might influence her report of him to her family. The utmost she could obtain on this head, was a promise to say not a single word which she could avoid, and Dora felt that with this she ought to be satisfied, for silence was indeed a great kindness in a case where there was so much obvious to condemnation. Little as she had known of Harriett, yet the parting was very painful, for never had she felt so much the want of a friend to whom she might

look for consolation and assistance, and to whom she could open her heart in perfect confidence as to its feelings, without adverting personally to her situation. With Frank alone could she enjoy this—with him, she could reason, or pray, or weep ; and, young as he was, so thoroughly could he enter into her thoughts, and participate her wishes, and so deeply was his mind embued with devout feelings and religious knowledge, that he might be said to perform to her the patriarch's office, and support the enfeebled hands stretched out to beg for mercy on another.

Short as her absence had been, Stancliffe commented upon it with much unkindness, but in a manner which implied such an entire dependance upon her, as to move compassion rather than blame. He had lost his appetite since his present confinement, more than at any former period, and it was very difficult to procure any food that could tempt him to eat, yet he perpetually urged the necessity of doing it, saying, he should never otherwise recover his strength. As Dora had now only one servant, besides a little damsel whose duty it was never to quit the apartment of Mrs. Judith, their food was not always prepared with the

attention necessary to tempt the appetite of an invalid; and although Dora knew little of the actual duties of a cook, she did her best to obviate these evils, and became, by care and practice, so far a proficient, that Stancliffe would not attempt to taste any thing but what she had prepared.' Yet rarely did it happen, that her utmost efforts succeeded; and when she had satisfied herself the best, and entirely destroyed her own appetite by bending over a hot fire, with that solicitude peculiar to a learner, (conscious that a minute too much or too little, may ruin all her labours) she had, nine times out of ten, the mortification of seeing her dishes rejected with disgust, and hearing a pathetic lamentation on the hardships a man experienced who was hungry and had nothing to eat which he could possibly take.

This evil became one of a growing nature, and included another of great importance in their present situation, that of expense. Stancliffe, laid upon the sofa, recollected not only what dainties he used to like, but the places where they might be purchased, and he never failed to send for them; but aware also of the expense, busied himself no less in contriving ways and means whereby the necessary ex-

penditure of his family might be curtailed. He urged Dora to such various duties, and such a ceaseless round of employment to this end, that although she was thankful that the loud and angry tone, and the oath which had formerly shocked her, were discarded, she yet saw that selfishness held its old place in the heart, and that he who thought nothing too much for himself, thought every thing too much for her and the aged relative who contributed to his support. He was truly penitent for grosser sins, and sincere in his resolutions for the future, should his health be restored; nor could she doubt that she now held the first place in his heart, but even the *first* was a low seat in a region so devoted to self-love, so blind to duty, so dead to the demands of gratitude and affection.

Again Frank, though distant, became the sharer of her cares, and her effectual assistant, for the commencement of the shooting season enabled him to supply his sister pretty constantly with game; and the arrival of Frank's baskets, or even the expectation of them, broke agreeably on the wearisome monotony of Stancliffe's life, whilst his letters cheered the heart of Dora. Even the old lady partook

this pleasure; for at those times the invalid was in good humour, admitted her visits, and listened to her regular quotation from Thompson, beginning at the "whirring wing" of the partridge, and ending no one knew where.

Yet it was observed with mingled feelings of satisfaction, and sorrowful sympathy, by Dora, that after the first pleasure was past on the receipt of these presents, Stancliffe usually sunk into deep thought, and by degrees he happily became more anxious about the donor than his gift, and the first enquiry was after the letters of Frank—this was succeeded by the wonder of "how he looks? what he is reading? and whether that stately old square-toes made him really comfortable?"

"It is evident that he does," Dora would answer, "from the facility with which he is enabled to prove kindness to us:—poor fellow! how happy does it make him to do these things, and if he had money, how gladly would he send that also."

Money was unhappily an object which Dora was compelled to desire, as the reward given to her husband's short though efficient services, together with the payment of Mrs. Judith's annuity, was long since expended;

and although she continued to receive a salary from Mr. Hazlehurst for certain writing which she could do in her own house, yet her utmost economy could not enable her to meet the extraordinary expenses incurred by her husband. Every day increased the pressure on her spirits, and her health was much affected, yet she struggled incessantly to appear cheerful, and prevent the settled dejection which now oppressed Stancliffe, from becoming habitual, and to preserve the old lady in her usual state of childish enjoyment and supposed importance.

Long and melancholy was the winter thus passed; there were no letters from her father to relieve their pecuniary necessities, no change occurred to diversify the scene, no friend looked in to cheer them, and books, those silent but most precious companions, could be rarely adopted; for poor Dora's time, when not devoted to the active cares demanded by her decided invalid, and her elderly charge, was given to writing tedious translations, which frequently puzzled but never amused her; and although Stancliffe had generally a book near him, he was really too poorly, or his mind too much occupied, to derive amusement from

it, or the power of abstracting himself. "Read this to me, Dora, immediately"—"finish those letters for Hazlehurst"—"warm me this jelly" —"I wish you would go to the fish-market, directly; every thing I like will be gone, if you are not quick:" such were the requisitions which alone varied an existence which it is certain was too busy for *ennui* on her part. When, completely overpowered with toil or anxiety, she was compelled to take a short respite, Stancliffe always appeared in much alarm, and shewed her at this period more of that kind attention so endearing to the heart of woman, than he had done since her bridal days—it was ever received with thankfulness; but unhappily the eyes of Dora were opened to her husband's character, and the general motives which actuated him; and she feared the value of her life and her services, not his love or gratitude, were most probably operating in moments like these. How such fear affects a warm and tender heart, conscious that it has merited the returns of love, and feeling itself still capable of full forgiveness of the past, and free confidence for the future, may be estimated, but can never be described— many a heart is wrung by it, but few have

spoken of the sensation. Dora strove against these agonizing thoughts, she remembered that there is no state of mind so dark, but it may be enlightened, so vile, but it may be purified, so cold and dull, but it may be warmed and quickened.

One Sunday morning, when the invalid appeared something better than usual, she ventured to propose going to church, to which, contrary to long precedent, he cheerfully assented. As Dora crept along the most unfrequented streets, almost with the downcast air of a guilty thing, envying every woman she passed, who leaned on the arm of a husband or brother, and walked in peace and happiness to partake the blessings of social worship, she was led to look back to those happy sabbaths of her early days at Crickhowel, when the sunshine that lighted up the paradise around her was reflected from the calm devotion, the untroubled peace, that made a paradise in her bosom. It was the sacrament day, and she resolved again to partake of that bread and that cup, which might strengthen her to pass through the "vale of tears" before her; but the contemplation of this hallowed refreshment brought so strongly to her mind the

recollection of those sublime emotions which affected her the first time she approached the table of our Lord, that she felt astonished to think that within seven years any person could be so altered as she felt herself to be. "A long life seems to have passed over me," said Dora to herself; "and the apathy of age, the exhaustion of the soul, is come upon me—I will, and I can lament my sins, and listen in humility to exhortation; but to rejoice even in the glad tidings of salvation is no longer in my power—I may smile in the face to man, but I cannot lift up my heart in the triumph of holy joy to God—the last tear of holy rapture has visited my eyes thus early."

Dora was mistaken.

We will not presume to speak farther of those aspirations of the Christian's soul which in worship, whether private or public, unites the creature in some measure to the Creator, and gives it a foretaste of that immortality which has always the blessed effect of rendering our severest duties easy, and our sharpest sorrows less painful. When Dora left the church, she felt strong and prepared for every trial; but as she drew nearer home, the recollection of her lengthened absence, the fear that

it should prove the cause of anger and of sin in her husband, the consciousness that not only his new-born virtues, but his life, hung on a slender thread, and the solicitude she felt to preserve and cherish both, filled her with anxiety; and although one moment she trusted her prayers would be heard, the next she trembled for the consequences of her conduct.

Such must ever be the feelings of a married woman so circumstanced, and her dependance should be a matter of serious consideration to him who holds in his power a responsibility so awful: to the great relief of Dora, at present her little household were all in a tranquil state, her husband received her without any comment, and after informing her that he had taken some blanc mange, began again to turn over the leaves of a large Bible, which lay on the table before the great chair in which he now always sat.

"I have had two visits from my aunt during your absence, (for really the time seemed very long;) poor woman, she is worse than ever, she repeated the same words over each time, again and again—I must own they struck me much, and I am looking in the Bible for them; I suppose they are there, but I am not certain."

"Do you recollect them, my dear?"

"I cannot forget them—she said perpetually, 'tho' woo'd, chastized, a flagrant rebel still.'"

"They are in Young's Night Thoughts—he speaks of man as disobedient to his Creator, and says, he is,

'Tho' woo'd, chastized, a flagrant rebel still,
'A rebel—to the thunders of his throne,
'A rebel—to the pleadings of his love.'—

I will find you the passage."

"Don't trouble yourself—it has given me food for reflection—I am that rebel, if ever man was, for I have rebelled alike against mercy and judgment; goodness has not drawn me—suffering has not warned me—no one has had more to be thankful for, and few, very few, have been less grateful."

Dora did not answer, for her heart was too full to speak—she could not, she durst not, contradict this short, true statement, of his past conduct; she knew that to "speak peace, when there is no peace," is cruelty in the garb of kindness; yet pity, commiseration, tenderness, penetrated her heart for him, and had the precepts of her faith admitted the idea, there was no pains she could not have endured,

no action she could not have performed, to render his penitence availing.

"What is the conclusion given to this passage?" said Stancliffe, after a long pause—"yes! find it for me, Dora—yet I know not whether I am now able, or whether reading or thinking will do me any good—how much I have thought, how deeply I have lamented, God only knows; yet I fear I am just what I was!"

"I will read the Gospels to you, my dear; it is only in the New Testament that we can find rest to our souls, under the burthen of conscious guilt."

"I must read for myself," was the reply, followed by profound silence, and Dora feared to break in upon a salutary train of thought even by good words—slow as was his progress, frequent as were the relapses of a mind so blind to the higher duties, and so devoid of the sensibilities of a Christian, it was yet to her a constant consolation that Stancliffe had never sought to deaden the reproaches of his conscience by recurring to the arguments of infidelity, or denying his responsibility at the great tribunal which he evidently approached with just alarm, and an increasing sense of his

own unworthiness not only in deed but in thought.

The time arrived at length when she might say, "behold, he prayeth:"—need we say of such a wife, that she prayed with him, and for him; that she watched over him with the fond broodings of the parent bird over its half-fledged young, happy when at length her holy solicitude prevailed upon him to conquer false shame, and lingering pride, so far as to admit the visits of a clergyman in their neighbourhood, who kindly entered his chamber as a friend, and exercised the duties of a pastor day after day, during the succeeding winter.

Stancliffe, sensible that the *actions* of a repentant sinner are the only sure criterion of his sincerity, was deeply troubled that the state of his health prevented him from proving his humility, faith, and virtuous intentions. Dora soothed him in this, by an assurance "that submission to this infliction was in itself no little proof of obedience in a mind so subject to all extremes;" she told him, "that patience included a self-subjugation, which required the aid of many Christian virtues, and in his state, humble endurance, and cheerful ac-

quiescence, was required in lieu of more active virtues.'

"But there are some things I must do, weak as I am—Dora! Dora! by all your past unequalled patience, think what it is which I would do! which I ought to do! speak for me to your own kind heart."

"I blame myself much for not having done so before; but, alas! your sufferings have at times been so great, I feared to awaken them —Alice is a mother; she has been comfortably provided for, and has recovered her health; Frank's pocket-money, and my ornaments, provided the means."

"And if I die, Dora, you will not suffer a poor wretch to lay not only his birth, but the sins of his unprotected youth, to my long and terrible account? Oh! if you knew how this thought haunts me"—

"I beseech you to be quite easy on this head—why did you suffer it to haunt you, Everton?"

"Why, indeed!—I ought to have known and trusted you—but mine, Dora, has been a cold, selfish heart, and it cannot easily comprehend the conduct and the feelings of a better—

I see it all now—my parents indulged me till I fancied all things should yield to my will; and as far as I was able, it has been the business of my life to make them—there lay the great evil—thence arose the pride, the sin, the anger, the cruelty of my nature."

At this period, poor Mrs. Judith was seized with a paralytic affection, and after a few days' confinement, sunk, without struggle or pain, into the grave. Though her speech and her limbs were affected, she was evidently sensible, and looked for Dora's attendance in the most anxious and affecting manner. Stancliffe evinced the sincerity of his repentance at this time in a striking manner, for he entirely resigned Dora to the sick room of his aunt, although her absolute necessity for his happiness, and his personal comforts, had never been half so great, and the presence of death in the house was in itself an affecting circumstance. Mrs. Judith left no will, and of course her property devolved to Stancliffe: his first observation upon the subject was, "we will devise a legacy for her, Dora, to the Miss Lawrences."

During Mrs. Judith's illness, Mr. Sydenham came to Liverpool, and was received with as

much pleasure by Stancliffe as could be experienced by one whose mind was so perpetually employed on the most awful subjects, and harrassed by conflicts with his own feelings and propensities, which much pain and weakness rendered him little able to bear. It is not on the bed of death, amid the flutterings of a fevered pulse, the weariness of aching limbs, trembling nerves, a confused brain, and an enfeebled mind, that man should enter on the duties of examining his heart, reforming its errors, and "preparing to meet his God:" one was "called at the eleventh hour," that no one might utterly despair, but only one—therefore none should presume.

With Sydenham, Stancliffe held many long and affecting conversations, when his rapidly increasing weakness permitted it; and in consequence of his request, after Mrs. Judith's funeral, that gentleman set out for Frank. A desire to see him had been the single point in which Dora had failed to indulge the invalid, judging that the interview would be too affecting to them both, and perceiving also that Stancliffe's weakness now rendered him subject to slight delirium, which she exceedingly dreaded to increase.

It was a satisfaction to Dora to see Frank, though very pale, yet much stronger than he used to be, for the country had agreed with him; and though he had thought much of his sister, the daily sight of her trials had not pressed upon his spirits as they used to do, and he was aware that her present afflictions were relieved greatly to her from the hope which accompanied them. When he approached Stancliffe, to his painful surprise, a faint hectic rose to the cheek of the patient, and he looked disturbed and alarmed.

"Do you not know me, dear Everton? it is Frank, whom you wished for, and expected to see; your brother Frank."

"Then you are not dead! give me your hand!" Frank took that thin wasted hand, and pressed it to his lips, and Stancliffe became soon more composed, though he remained silent—by degrees resuming his memory, and silently wiping away the tears that slowly filled his glistening eyes.

From this time he could not bear Frank out his sight, yet he urged both him and Dora to relieve each other. Sydenham was again absent, but he returned soon, accompanied by

Mrs. Aylmer; after which, he was obliged to set out to the continent with his father.

Dora was thankful for the presence of her friend, but apprehending that her arrival might agitate the invalid, she would not have mentioned it if Sydenham had not done it, in accounting for his own unwonted desertion of the sick room, on taking leave of him.

"I am glad she is come—very glad," said Stancliffe; "she is a good woman, I had need have such about me—how many mercies are granted *me*, who deserve only punishment—I do not understand this, it distresses and alarms me."

Frank endeavoured to soothe him; he spoke of the goodness of God, the perfection of redeeming grace, the efficacy of repentance, and faith:—there was an eager grasping of the mind after the hope thus offered, but the wandering intellect, the deeply troubled conscience, the pain-worn body, refused repose—the quick glancing, the troubled tossing, the anxious sighing, told the sympathising comforter that his labour was in vain.

"Mrs. Aylmer!—where is Mrs. Aylmer?" said the invalid, hastily.

She came immediately upstairs, and approached him with that compassionate air his present deplorable condition inspired.

"Forgive—forgive me for using Dora, *your* Dora, so ill—take her again to your heart—your home—restore her—comfort her—do not lose sight of her again."

"I will not," said Mrs. Aylmer, with solemn earnestness.

"But do not teach her to forget me—not *quite* forget me—no! my heart cannot yield that—'tis a selfish heart yet—very selfish—very hard, even now—'a rebel still.'"

"Do not say any more, my love, just now," said Dora, putting her arm under his head, to assist his breathing, which was short and difficult.

"Yes, yes, I must speak—I must conquer—dear Mrs. Aylmer—in time—prevail on her to think of Sydenham—he is good and—I can say no more—I have made my sacrifice, none of you can tell what it has cost me."

His head sunk on Dora's shoulder, and she thought he had fainted; but in another moment there was a convulsive motion of the whole body, and in a thick altered voice he

cried hastily, "Dora! Frank! where are you? pray for me."

"We do pray for you, earnestly, ardently," said Frank; "We trust our prayers are heard," whispered Dora, in a tender but tremulous voice.

"A little time—a little longer time, my mind is clear again; now I see it all—and I want, I pray—I—a little more time."

As Stancliffe spoke, he eagerly, though feebly, pressed the hand of his wife; suddenly his hold was relaxed, a quick start, a long drawn sigh succeeded, and the immortal spirit fled to its eternal audit.

CHAP XIV.

Dora was blessed with the presence of a true friend, and a sympathising brother, on this awful occasion. She was neither troubled with the visitant who might at some times have wondered why she wept so much; at others, been surprised that she could speak so calmly. They well knew how closely the heart still clings to that object over which it has watched so long and so tenderly; and they knew also, that since Dora took hope to her heart as to the eternal concerns of her husband, (a hope which, whatever might be their own opinion, they desired her to possess) it was not possible that she could long lament him.

Happily, when the first ebullition of feeling had subsided, and Dora felt the full claims of that friend who had never ceased to be a tender and considerate mother, and that beloved brother who had not only sorrowed with her sorrow, but been the partaker of her affectionate care and longsuffering; in obedience to

their wishes, she prepared herself to seek in a scene distant from that of her sorrows, and dear to her memory, for restoration of health destroyed by that unceasing succession of cares which had so long harrassed her, as to overcome alike the energy of youth, and the fortitude of mind.

Christian patience alone had sustained her, it had shed the light of cheerfulness over many a gloomy hour, and given the tranquillity of resignation to many a day of sorrow. It had preserved the comforts of peace in a situation full of incentives to domestic warfare, and bestowed the power of reflection and personal activity in the midst of every provocative to irritation, and the various inquietudes arising from embarrassment in circumstances and turpitude in conduct: alike subduing anger, repelling jealousy, and controuling grief—such patience is the offspring of that *faith* " which overcometh the world."

Before Dora set out, she had the satisfaction of receiving letters from her father, informing her " that he was returning," and giving the necessary orders for her accommodation and that of the late sufferer. She felt much comfort in these letters, and still more in the pros-

pect that her father would end his days in his own country, and probably have his eyes closed by that darling son whose past danger had hastened his return—her meditations were broken upon by the arrival of Mr. Blackwell.

The old man gazed upon the young widow with a look of such deep sympathy, that it appeared as if her pale face and attenuated form wounded his heart beyond endurance—he took her hand in silence, which Dora broke.

"Do not look upon me so mournfully, my dear Sir, for there is reproach in your sorrow—often has my heart been wrung with pain from the idea of having offended you; but since my sad task is over, and I have reaped from it satisfaction of the most consolatory kind, I trust you will pardon me, and believe that I have, by patient and active kindness, atoned for my deficiencies in wisdom and energy."

"If, Dora, I should live to see you live and be happy, perhaps I may rejoice in that satisfaction of which you speak, but of which I cannot partake. But even in that case, (which is one I scarcely dare to hope) never ask me for approbation of your late conduct, since it is not in my power to bestow it. In pursuing

the dictates of a mistaken compassion, you renounced an awful, painful, but most imperious duty; and your example is the more dangerous, because it is combined with so many virtuous feelings, and attended with apparent success, (since from what Frank tells me, some earnest was given of sincerity in repentance, reform in principle and feeling")—

"That, Sir, is my consolation—my reward —I presume not to argue; you may be right, (considering the matter on a broad basis,) but I am an humble individual, and I trust my example will do no harm."

"It will certainly not injure your own sex, child, but"—

"Thank you, dear Sir; you have conceded enough to satisfy my feelings, if not to justify my conduct; on that subject I can, and ought, to hear your strictures with humility and PATIENCE."

THE END.

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